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THE WORKS

OF

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.

VIII.

THE WORKS

OF

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.

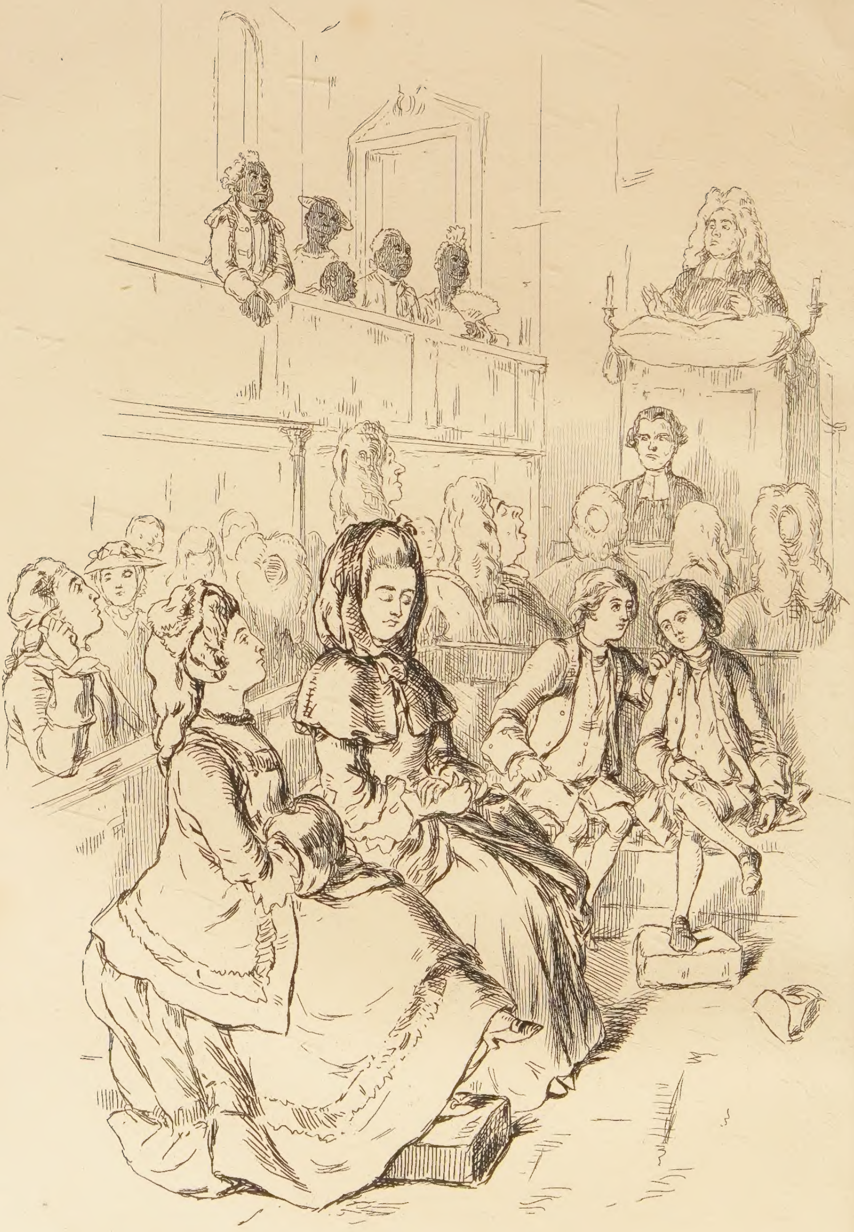
IN TWENTY-TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME VIII.

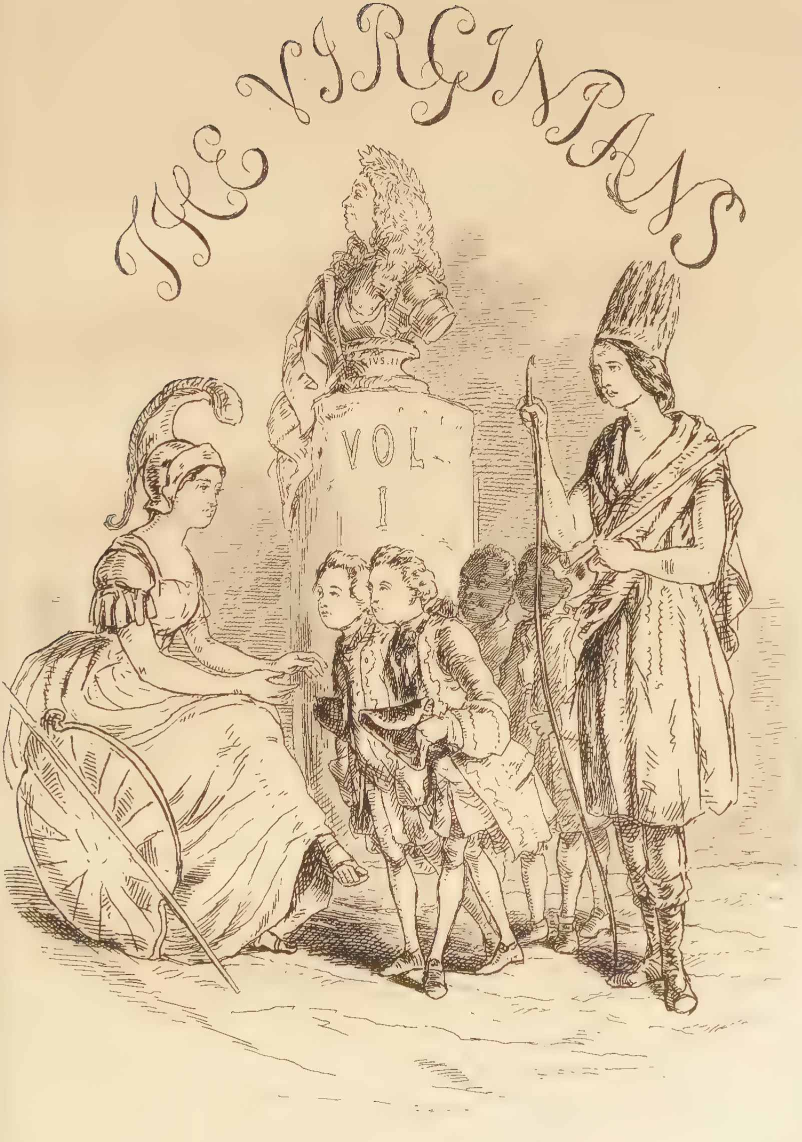
THE VIRGINIANS.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE.
1869



THE FAMILY PEW.


THE VIRGINIANS
VOL. I

LONDON
SMITH, ELDER & CO. [illegible] WATERLOO PLACE

THE VIRGINIANS.

A TALE OF THE LAST CENTURY.

By W. M. THACKERAY.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE.
1869

TO

SIR HENRY DAVISON,

CHIEF JUSTICE OF MADRAS,

This Book is inscribed

BY

AN AFFECTIONATE OLD FRIEND.

LONDON, *September* 7, 1859.

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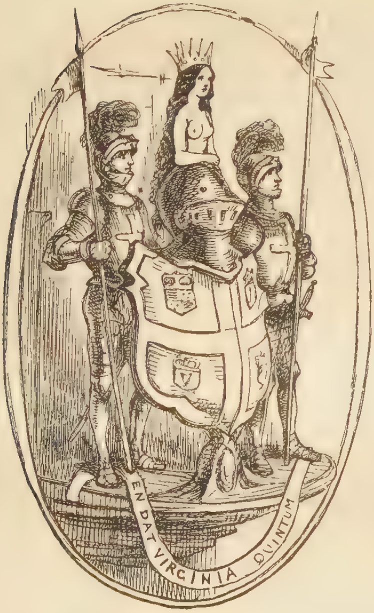
THE VIRGINIANS.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH ONE OF THE VIRGINIANS VISITS HOME.



ON the library wall of one of the most famous writers of America, there hang two crossed swords, which his relatives wore in the great War of Independence. The one sword was gallantly drawn in the service of the king, the other was the weapon of a brave and honoured republican soldier. The possessor of the harmless trophy has earned for himself a name alike honoured in his ancestors' country and his own, where genius such as his has always a peaceful welcome.

The ensuing history reminds me of yonder swords in the historian's study at Boston. In the Revolutionary War, the subjects of this story, natives of America, and children of the Old Dominion, found themselves engaged on different sides in the quarrel, coming together peaceably at its conclusion, as brethren should, their love never having materially diminished, however angrily the contest divided them. The colonel in scarlet, and the general in blue and buff, hang side by side in the wainscoted parlour of the Warringtons, in England, where a descendant of one of the brothers has shown their portraits to me, with many of the letters which they wrote, and the books and papers which belonged to them. In the Warrington family, and to distinguish them from other personages of that respectable race, these effigies have always gone by the name of "The Virginians;" by which name their memoirs are christened.

They both of them passed much time in Europe. They lived just on the verge of that Old World from which we are drifting away so swiftly. They were familiar with many varieties of men and fortune. Their lot brought them into contact with personages of whom we read only in books, who seem alive, as I read in the Virginians' letters regarding them, whose voices I almost fancy I hear, as I read the yellow pages written scores of years since, blotted with the boyish tears of disappointed passion, dutifully despatched after famous balls and ceremonies of the grand Old World, scribbled by camp-fires, or out of prison: nay, there is one that has a bullet through it, and of which a greater portion of the text is blotted out with the blood of the bearer.

These letters had probably never been preserved, but for the affectionate thrift of one person, to whom they never failed in their dutiful correspondence. Their mother kept all her sons' letters, from the very first, in which Henry, the younger of the twins, sends his love to his brother, then ill of a sprain at his grandfather's house of Castlewood, in Virginia, and thanks his grandpapa for a horse which he rides with his tutor, down to the last, "from my beloved son," which reached her but a few hours before her death. The venerable lady never visited Europe, save once with her parents in the reign of George the Second; took refuge in Richmond when the house of Castlewood was burned down during the war; and was called Madam Esmond ever after that event; never caring much for the name or family of Warrington, which she held in very slight estimation as compared to her own.

The letters of the Virginians, as the reader will presently see, from specimens to be shown to him, are by no means full. They are hints rather than descriptions—indications and outlines chiefly: it may be, that the present writer has mistaken the forms, and filled in the colour wrongly: but, poring over the documents, I have tried to imagine the situation of the writer, where he was, and by what persons surrounded. I have drawn the figures as I fancied they were; set down conversations as I think I might have heard them; and so, to the best of my ability, endeavoured to revivify the bygone times and people. With what success the task has been accomplished, with what profit or amusement to himself, the kind reader will please to determine.

One summer morning in the year 1756, and in the reign of his Majesty King George the Second, the "Young Rachel," Virginian ship, Edward Franks master, came up the Avon river on her happy return from her annual voyage to the Potomac. She proceeded to Bristol with the tide, and moored in the stream as near as possible to Trail's wharf, to which she was consigned. Mr. Trail, her part owner, who could survey his ship from his counting-house windows, straightway took boat and came up her side. The owner of the "Young Rachel," a large grave man in his own hair, and of a demure aspect, gave the hand of welcome to Captain Franks, who stood on his deck, and congratulated the captain upon the speedy and fortunate voyage which he had made. And remarking that we ought to be thankful to heaven for its mercies, he proceeded presently to business by asking particulars relative to cargo and passengers.

Franks was a pleasant man, who loved a joke. "We have," says he, "but yonder ugly negro boy, who is fetching the trunks, and a passenger who has the state cabin to himself."

Mr. Trail looked as if he would have preferred more mercies from heaven. "Confound you, Franks, and your luck! The 'Duke William,' which came in last week, brought fourteen, and she is not half of our tonnage."

"And this passenger, who has the whole cabin, don't pay nothin'," continued the Captain. "Swear now, it will do you good, Mr. Trail, indeed it will. I have tried the medicine."

"A passenger take the whole cabin and not pay? Gracious mercy, are you a fool, Captain Franks?"

"Ask the passenger himself, for here he comes." And, as the master spoke, a young man of some nineteen years of age came up the hatchway. He had a cloak and a sword under his arm, and was dressed in deep mourning, and called out, "Gumbo, you idiot, why don't you fetch the baggage out of the cabin? Well, shipmate, our journey is ended. You will see all the little folks to-night whom you have been talking about. Give my love to Polly, and Betty, and Little Tommy; not forgetting my duty to Mrs. Franks. I thought, yesterday, the voyage would never be done, and now I am almost sorry it is over. That little berth in my cabin looks very comfortable now I am going to leave it."

Mr. Trail scowled at the young passenger who had paid no money for his passage. He scarcely nodded his head to the stranger, when Captain Franks said, "This here gentleman is Mr. Trail, sir, whose name you have a-heerd of."

"It's pretty well known in Bristol, sir," says Mr. Trail, majestically.

"And this is Mr. Warrington, Madam Esmond Warrington's son, of Castlewood," continued the Captain.

The British merchant's hat was instantly off his head, and the owner of the beaver was making a prodigious number of bows, as if a crown-prince were before him.

"Gracious powers, Mr. Warrington! This is a delight, indeed! What a crowning mercy that your voyage should have been so prosperous! You must have my boat to go on shore. Let me cordially and respectfully welcome you to England: let me shake your hand as the son of my benefactress and patroness, Mrs. Esmond Warrington, whose name is known and honoured on Bristol 'Change, I warrant you. Isn't it, Franks?"

"There's no sweeter tobacco comes from Virginia, and no better brand than the Three Castles," says Mr. Franks, drawing a great brass tobacco-box from his pocket, and thrusting a quid into his jolly mouth. "You don't know what a comfort it is, sir; you'll take to it, bless you, as you grow older. Won't he, Mr. Trail? I wish you had ten shiploads of it instead of one. You might have ten shiploads: I've told Madam Esmond so; I've rode over her plantation; she treats me like a lord when I go to the house; she don't grudge me the best of wine, or keep me cooling my heels in the counting-room, as some folks does" (with a look at Mr. Trail). "She is a real-born lady, she is; and might have a thousand hogsheads as easy as her hundreds, if there were but hands enough."

"I have lately engaged in the Guinea trade, and could supply her ladyship with any number of healthy young negroes before next fall," said Mr. Trail, obsequiously.

"We are averse to the purchase of negroes from Africa," said the young gentleman, coldly. "My grandfather and my mother have always objected to it, and I do not like to think of selling or buying the poor wretches."

"It is for their good, my dear young sir! for their temporal and their spiritual good!" cried Mr. Trail. "And we purchase the poor creatures only for their benefit; let me talk this matter over with you at my own house. I can introduce you to a happy home, a Christian family, and a British merchant's honest fare. Can't I, Captain Franks?"

"Can't say," growled the Captain. "Never asked me to take bite or sup at your table. Asked me to psalm-singing once, and to hear Mr. Ward preach: don't care for them sort of entertainments."

Not choosing to take any notice of this remark, Mr. Trail continued in his low tone: "Business is business, my dear young sir, and I know, 'tis only my duty, the duty of all of us, to cultivate the fruits of the earth in their season. As the heir of Lady Esmond's estate; for I speak, I believe, to the heir of that great property?"

The young gentleman made a bow—

"I would urge upon you, at the very earliest moment, the propriety, the duty of increasing the ample means with which heaven has blessed you. As an honest factor, I could not do otherwise: as a prudent man, should I scruple to speak of what will tend to your profit and mine? No, my dear Mr. George."

"My name is not George; my name is Henry," said the young man as he turned his head away, and his eyes filled with tears.

"Gracious powers! what do you mean, sir? Did you not say you were my lady's heir? and is not George Esmond Warrington, Esq. ——"

"Hold your tongue, you fool!" cried Mr. Franks, striking the merchant a tough blow on his sleek sides, as the young lad turned away. "Don't you see the young gentleman a-swabbing his eyes, and note his black clothes?"

"What do you mean, Captain Franks, by laying your hand on your owners? Mr. George is the heir; I know the Colonel's will well enough."

"Mr. George is there," said the Captain, pointing with his thumb to the deck.

"Where?" cries the factor.

"Mr. George is there!" reiterated the Captain, again lifting up his finger towards the top-mast, or the sky beyond. "He is dead a year, sir, come next 9th of July. He would go out with General Braddock on that dreadful business to the Belle Rivière. He and a thousand more never came back again. Every man of them was murdered as he fell. You know the Indian way, Mr. Trail?" And here the Captain passed his hand rapidly round his head. "Horrible! ain't it, sir? horrible! He was a fine young man, the very picture of this one; only his hair was black, which is now hanging in a bloody Indian wigwam. He was often and often on board of the 'Young Rachel,' and would have his chests of books broke open on deck before they was landed. He was a shy and silent young gent: not like this one, which was the merriest, wildest young fellow, full of his songs and fun. He took on dreadful at the news; went to his bed, had that fever which lays so many of 'em by the heels along that swampy Potomac, but he's got better on the voyage: the voyage makes every one better; and, in course, the young gentleman can't be for ever a-crying after a brother who dies and leaves him a great fortune. Ever since we sighted Ireland he has been quite gay and happy, only he would go off at times, when he was most merry, saying, 'I wish my dearest Georgy could enjoy this here sight along with me,' and when you mentioned the t'other's name, you see, he couldn't stand it." And the honest Captain's own eyes filled with tears, as he turned and looked towards the object of his compassion.

Mr. Trail assumed a lugubrious countenance befitting the tragic compliment with which he prepared to greet the young Virginian; but the latter answered him very curtly, declined his offers of hospitality, and only stayed in Mr. Trail's house long enough to drink a glass of wine and to take up a sum of money of which he stood in need. But he and Captain Franks parted on the very warmest terms, and all the little crew of the "Young Rachel" cheered from the ship's side as their passenger left it.

Again and again Harry Warrington and his brother had pored over the English map, and determined upon the course which they should take upon arriving at Home. All Americans who love the old country—and what gently-nurtured man or woman of Anglo-Saxon race does not?—have ere this rehearsed their English travels, and visited in fancy the spots with which their hopes, their parents' fond stories, their friends' descriptions, have rendered them familiar. There are few things to me more affecting in the history of the quarrel which divided the two great nations than the recurrence of that word Home, as used by the younger towards the elder country. Harry Warrington had his chart laid out. Before London, and its glorious temples of St. Paul's and St. Peter's; its grim Tower, where the brave and loyal had shed their blood, from Wallace down to Balmerino and Kilmarnock, pitied by gentle hearts;—before the awful window at Whitehall, whence the martyr Charles had issued, to kneel once more, and then ascend to heaven;—before Playhouses, Parks, and Palaces, wondrous resorts of wit, pleasure, and splendour;—before Shakspeare's Resting-place under the tall spire which rises by Avon, amidst the sweet Warwickshire pastures;—before Derby, and Falkirk, and Culloden, where the cause of honour and loyalty had fallen, it might be to rise no more:—before all these points in their pilgrimage there was one which the young Virginian brothers held even more sacred, and that was the home of their family,—that old Castlewood in Hampshire, about which their parents had talked so fondly. From Bristol to Bath, from Bath to Salisbury, to Winchester, to Hexton, to *Home;* they knew the way, and had mapped the journey many and many a time.

We must fancy our American traveller to be a handsome young fellow, whose suit of sables only made him look the more interesting. The plump landlady from her bar, surrounded by her china and punch-bowls, and stout gilded bottles of strong waters, and glittering rows of silver flagons, looked kindly after the young gentleman as he passed through the inn-hall from his post-chaise, and the obsequious chamberlain bowed him upstairs to the "Rose" or the "Dolphin." The trim chambermaid dropped her best curtsey for his fee, and Gumbo, in the inn-kitchen, where the townsfolk drank their mug of ale by the great fire, bragged of his young master's splendid house in Virginia, and of the immense wealth to which he was heir. The post-chaise whirled the traveller through the most delightful home-scenery his eyes had ever lighted on. If English landscape is pleasant to the American of the present day, who must needs contrast the rich woods and glowing pastures, and picturesque ancient villages of the old country with the rough aspect of his own, how much pleasanter must Harry Warrington's course have been, whose journeys had lain through swamps and forest solitudes from one Virginian ordinary to another log-house at the end of the day's route, and who now lighted suddenly upon the busy, happy, splendid scene of English summer? And the high-road, a hundred years ago, was not that grass-grown desert of the present time. It was alive with constant travel and traffic: the country towns and inns swarmed with life and gaiety. The ponderous waggon, with its bells and plodding team; the light post-coach that achieved the journey from the "White Hart," Salisbury, to the "Swan with Two Necks," London, in two days; the strings of pack-horses that had not yet left the road; my lord's gilt post-chaise and six, with the outriders galloping on a-head; the country squire's great coach and heavy Flanders mares; the farmers trotting to market, or the parson jolting to the cathedral town on Dumpling, his wife behind on the pillion—all these crowding sights and brisk people greeted the young traveller on his summer journey. Hodge the farmer's boy took off his hat, and Polly the milk-maid bobbed a curtsey, as the chaise whirled over the pleasant village-green, and the white-headed children lifted their chubby faces and cheered. The church-spires glistened with gold, the cottage-gables glared in sunshine, the great elms murmured in summer, or cast purple shadows over the grass. Young Warrington never had had such a glorious day, or witnessed a scene so delightful. To be nineteen years of age, with high health, high spirits, and a full purse, to be making your first journey, and rolling through the country in a post-chaise at nine miles an hour—O happy youth! almost it makes one young to think of him! But Harry was too eager to give more than a passing glance at the Abbey at Bath, or gaze with more than a moment's wonder at the mighty Minster at Salisbury. Until he beheld *Home* it seemed to him he had no eyes for any other place.

At last the young gentleman's post-chaise drew up at the rustic inn on Castlewood Green, of which his grandsire had many a time talked to him, and which bears as its ensign, swinging from an elm near the inn porch, the Three Castles of the Esmond family. They had a sign, too, over the gateway of Castlewood House, bearing the same cognizance. This was the hatchment of Francis, Lord Castlewood, who now lay in the chapel hard by, his son reigning in his stead.

Harry Warrington had often heard of Francis, Lord Castlewood. It was for Frank's sake, and for his great love towards the boy, that

Colonel Esmond determined to forego his claim to the English estates and rank of his family, and retired to Virginia. The young man had led a wild youth; he had fought with distinction under Marlborough; he had married a foreign lady, and most lamentably adopted her religion. At one time he had been a Jacobite (for loyalty to the sovereign was ever hereditary in the Esmond family), but had received some slight or injury from the Prince, which had caused him to rally to King George's side. He had, on his second marriage, renounced the errors of Popery which he had temporarily embraced, and returned to the Established Church again. He had, from his constant support of the King and the Minister of the time being, been rewarded by his Majesty George II., and died an English peer. An earl's coronet now figured on the hatchment which hung over Castlewood gate—and there was an end of the jolly gentleman. Between Colonel Esmond, who had become his stepfather, and his lordship there had ever been a brief but affectionate correspondence—on the Colonel's part especially, who loved his stepson, and had a hundred stories to tell about him to his grandchildren. Madam Esmond, however, said *she* could see nothing in her half-brother. He was dull, except when he drank too much wine, and that, to be sure, was every day at dinner. Then he was boisterous, and his conversation not pleasant. He was good-looking—yes—a fine tall stout animal; she had rather her boys should follow a different model. In spite of the grandfather's encomium of the late lord, the boys had no very great respect for their kinsman's memory. The lads and their mother were staunch Jacobites, though having every respect for his present Majesty; but right was right, and nothing could make their hearts swerve from their allegiance to the descendants of the martyr Charles.

With a beating heart Harry Warrington walked from the inn towards the house where his grandsire's youth had been passed. The little village-green of Castlewood slopes down towards the river, which is spanned by an old bridge of a single broad arch, and from this the ground rises gradually towards the house, grey with many gables and buttresses, and backed by a darkling wood. An old man sat at the wicket on a stone bench in front of the great arched entrance to the house, over which the earl's hatchment was hanging. An old dog was crouched at the man's feet. Immediately above the ancient sentry at the gate was an open casement with some homely flowers in the window, from behind which good-humoured girls' faces were peeping. They were watching the young traveller dressed in black as he walked up gazing towards the castle, and the ebony attendant who followed the gentleman's steps also accoutred in mourning. So was he at the gate in mourning, and the girls when they came out had black ribbons.

To Harry's surprise, the old man accosted him by his name. "You have had a nice ride to Hexton, Master Harry, and the sorrel carried you well."

"I think you must be Lockwood," said Harry, with rather a tremulous voice, holding out his hand to the old man. His grandfather had often told him of Lockwood, and how he had accompanied the Colonel and the young Viscount in Marlborough's wars forty years ago. The veteran seemed puzzled by the mark of affection which Harry extended to him. The old dog gazed at the new comer, and then went and put his head between his knees. "I have heard of you often. How did you know my name?"

"They say I forget most things," says the old man, with a smile; "but I ain't so bad as that quite. Only this mornin', when you went out, my darter says, 'Father, do you know why you have a black coat on?' 'In course I know why I have a black coat,' says I. 'My lord is dead. They say 'twas a foul blow, and Master Frank is my lord now, and Master Harry'—why, what have you done since you've went out this morning? Why, you have a grow'd taller and changed your hair—though I know—I know you."

One of the young women had tripped out by this time from the porter's lodge, and dropped the stranger a pretty curtsey. "Grandfather sometimes does not recollect very well," she said, pointing to her head. "Your honour seems to have heard of Lockwood?"

"And you, have you never heard of Colonel Henry Esmond?"

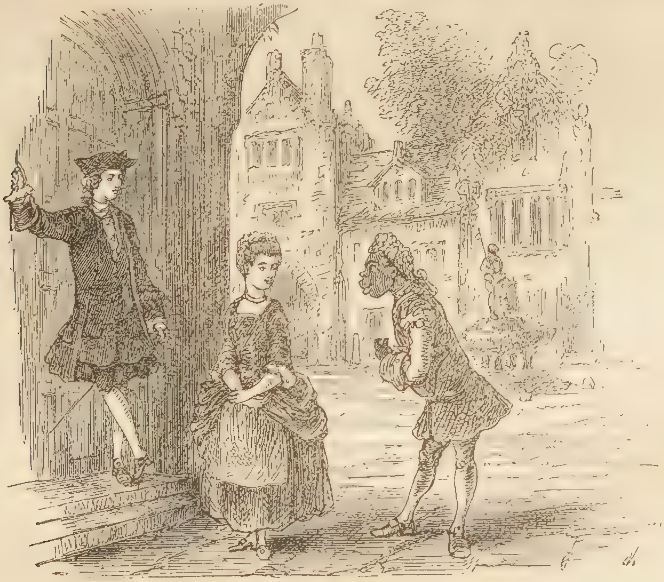
"He was Captain and Major in Webb's Foot, and I was with him in two campaigns, sure enough," cries Lockwood. "Wasn't I, Ponto?"

"The Colonel as married Viscountess Rachel, my late lord's mother? and went to live amongst the Indians? We have heard of him. Sure we have his picture in our gallery, and hisself painted it."

"Went to live in Virginia, and died there seven years ago, and I am his grandson."

"Lord, your honour! Why, your honour's skin's as white as mine," cries Molly. "Grandfather, do you hear this? His honour is Colonel Esmond's grandson that used to send you tobacco, and his honour have come all the way from Virginia."

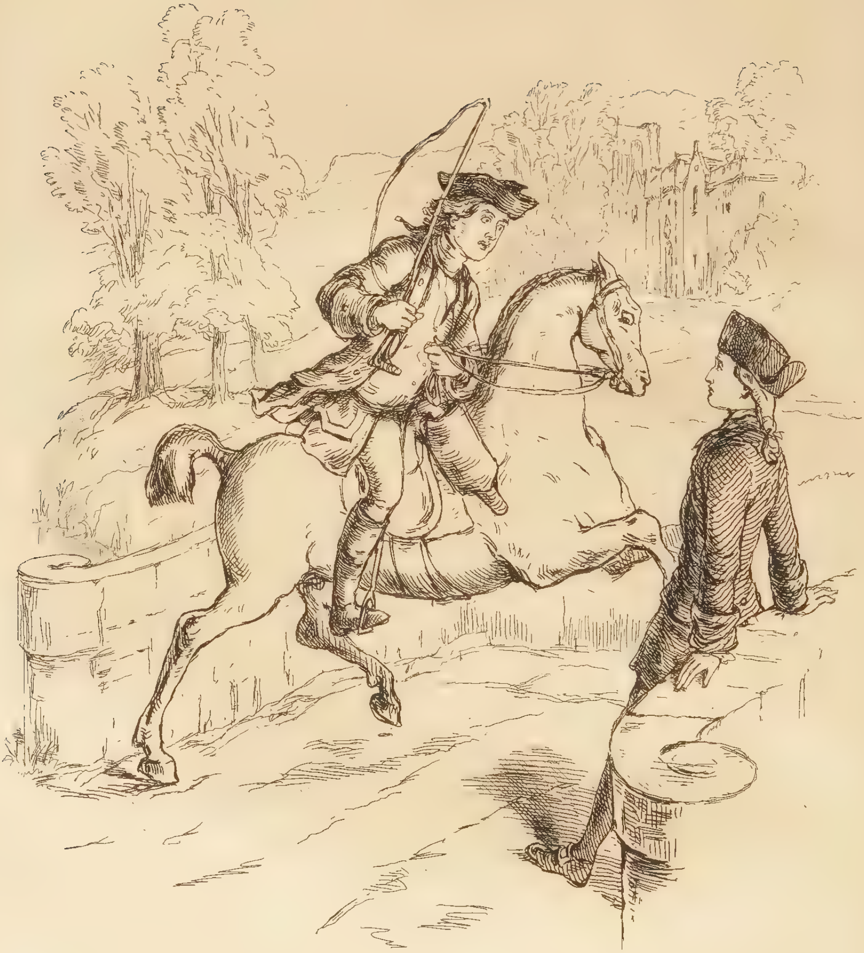
"To see you, Lockwood," says the young man, "and the family. I only set foot on English ground yesterday, and my first visit is for home. I may see the house, though the family are from home?" Molly dared to say Mrs. Barker would let his honour see the house, and Harry Warrington made his way across the court, seeming to know the place as well as if he had been born there, Miss Molly thought, who followed, accompanied by Mr. Gumbo making her a profusion of polite bows and speeches.



CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH HARRY HAS TO PAY FOR HIS SUPPER.

COLONEL ESMOND'S grandson rang for a while at his ancestors' house of Castlewood, before any one within seemed inclined to notice his summons. The servant, who at length issued from the door, seemed to be very little affected by the announcement that the visitor was a relation of the family. The family was away, and in their absence John cared very little for their relatives, but was eager to get back to his game at cards with Thomas in the window-seat. The housekeeper was busy getting ready for my lord and my lady, who were expected that evening. Only by strong entreaties could Harry gain leave to see my lady's sitting-room and the picture-room, where, sure enough, was a portrait of his grandfather in periwig and breastplate, the counterpart of their picture in Virginia, and a likeness of his grandmother, as Lady Castlewood, in a yet earlier habit of Charles II.'s time; her neck bare, her fair golden hair waving over her shoulders in ringlets which he remembered to have seen snowy white. From the contemplation of these sights the sulky housekeeper drove him. Her family was about to arrive. There was my lady the Countess, and my lord and his brother, and the young ladies and the Baroness, who was to have the state bedroom. Who was the Baroness? The Baroness Bernstein, the young ladies' aunt. Harry wrote down his name on a



A WELCOME TO OLD ENGLAND.

paper from his own pocket-book, and laid it on a table in the hall. "Henry Esmond Warrington, of Castlewood in Virginia, arrived in England yesterday—staying at the 'Three Castles' in the village." The lackeys rose up from their cards to open the door to him, in order to get their "vails," and Gumbo quitted the bench at the gate, where he had been talking with old Lockwood the porter, who took Harry's guinea, hardly knowing the meaning of the gift. During the visit to the home of his fathers, Harry had only seen little Polly's countenance that was the least unselfish or kindly; he walked away, not caring to own how disappointed he was, and what a damp had been struck upon him by the aspect of the place. They ought to have known him. Had any of them ridden up to his house in Virginia, whether the master were present or absent, the guests would have been made welcome, and, in sight of his ancestors' hall, he had to go and ask for a dish of bacon and eggs at a country ale-house!

After his dinner, he went to the bridge and sat on it, looking towards the old house, behind which the sun was descending as the rooks came cawing home to their nests in the elms. His young fancy pictured to itself many of the ancestors of whom his mother and grandsire had told him. He fancied knights and huntsmen crossing the ford—cavaliers of King Charles's days; my Lord Castlewood, his grandmother's first husband, riding out with hawk and hound. The recollection of his dearest lost brother came back to him as he indulged in these reveries, and smote him with a pang of exceeding tenderness and longing, insomuch that the young man hung his head and felt his sorrow renewed for the dear friend and companion with whom, until of late, all his pleasures and griefs had been shared. As he sat plunged in his own thoughts, which were mingled up with the mechanical clinking of the blacksmith's forge hard by, the noises of the evening, the talk of the rooks, and the calling of the birds, round about—a couple of young men on horseback dashed over the bridge. One of them, with an oath, called him a fool, and told him to keep out of the way—the other, who fancied he might have jostled the foot-passenger, and possibly might have sent him over the parapet, pushed on more quickly when he reached the other side of the water, calling likewise to Tom to come on; and the pair of young gentlemen were up the hill on their way to the house before Harry had recovered himself from his surprise at their appearance, and wrath at their behaviour. In a minute or two, this advanced guard was followed by two livery-servants on horseback, who scowled at the young traveller on the bridge a true British welcome of Curse you, who are you? After these, in a minute or two, came a coach-and-six, a ponderous vehicle having need of the horses which drew it, and containing three ladies, a couple of maids, and an armed man on a seat behind the carriage. Three handsome pale faces looked out at Harry Warrington as the carriage passed over the bridge, and did not return the salute which, recognizing the family arms, he gave it. The gentleman behind the carriage glared at him haughtily. Harry felt terribly alone. He thought he would go back to Captain Franks. The "Rachel" and her little tossing cabin seemed a cheery spot in comparison to that on which he stood. The inn folks did not know his name of Warrington. They told him that was my lady in the coach, with her step-daughter, my Lady Maria, and her daughter, my Lady Fanny; and the young gentleman in the grey frock was Mr. William, and he with powder on the chestnut was my lord. It was the latter had sworn the loudest, and called him a fool; and it was the grey frock which had nearly galloped Harry into the ditch.

The landlord of the "Three Castles" had shown Harry a bed-chamber, but he had refused to have his portmanteaux unpacked, thinking that, for a certainty, the folks at the great house would invite him to theirs. One, two, three hours passed, and there came no invitation. Harry was fain to have his trunks open at last, and to call for his slippers and gown. Just before dark, about two hours after the arrival of the first carriage, a second chariot with four horses had passed over the bridge, and a stout, high-coloured lady, with a very dark pair of eyes, had looked hard at Mr. Warrington. That was the Baroness Bernstein, the landlady said, my lord's aunt, and Harry remembered the first Lady Castlewood had come of a German family. Earl, and Countess, and Baroness, and postilions, and gentlemen and horses, had all disappeared behind the castle gate, and Harry was fain to go to bed at last, in the most melancholy mood and with a cruel sense of neglect and loneliness in his young heart. He could not sleep, and, besides, ere long, heard a prodigious noise, and cursing, and giggling, and screaming from my landlady's bar, which would have served to keep him awake.

Then Gumbo's voice was heard without, remonstrating, "You cannot go in, sar—my master asleep, sar!" but a shrill voice, with many oaths, which Harry Warrington recognized, cursed Gumbo for a stupid, negro woolly pate, and he was pushed aside, giving entrance to a flood of oaths into the room, and a young gentleman behind them.

"Beg your pardon, Cousin Warrington," cried the young blasphemer, "are you asleep? Beg your pardon for riding you over on the bridge. Didn't know you—course shouldn't have done it—thought it was a lawyer with a writ—dressed in black, you know. Gad! thought it was Nathan come to nab me." And Mr. William laughed incoherently. It was evident that he was excited with liquor.

"You did me great honour to mistake me for a sheriff's officer, cousin," says Harry, with great gravity, sitting up in his tall nightcap.

"Gad! I thought it was Nathan, and was going to send you souse into the river. But I ask your pardon. You see I had been drinking at the 'Bell' at Hexton, and the punch is good at the 'Bell' at Hexton. Hullo, you Davis! a bowl of punch; d'you hear?"

"I have had my share for to-night, cousin, and I should think you have," Harry continues, always in the dignified style.

"You want me to go, Cousin What's-your-name, I see," Mr. William said, with gravity. "You want me to go, and they want me to come, and I didn't want to come. I said, I'd see him hanged first,—that's what I said. Why should I trouble myself to come down all alone of an evening, and look after a fellow I don't care a pin for? Zackly what I said Zackly what Castlewood said. Why the devil should he go down? Castlewood says, and so said my lady, but the Baroness would have you. It's all the Baroness's doing, and if she says a thing it must be done; so you must just get up and come." Mr. Esmond delivered these words with the most amiable rapidity and indistinctness, running them into one another, and tacking about the room as he spoke. But the young Virginian was in great wrath. "I tell you what, cousin," he cried, "I won't move for the Countess, or for the Baroness, or for all the cousins in Castlewood." And when the landlord entered the chamber with the bowl of punch, which Mr. Esmond had ordered, the young gentleman in bed called out fiercely to the host, to turn that sot out of the room.

"Sot, you little tobacconist! Sot, you Cherokee!" screams out Mr. William. "Jump out of bed, and I'll drive my sword through your body. Why didn't I do it to-day when I took you for a bailiff—a confounded pettifogging bum-bailiff?" And he went on screeching more oaths and incoherences, until the landlord, the drawer, the hostler, and all the folks of the kitchen were brought to lead him away. After which Harry Warrington closed his tent round him in sulky wrath, and, no doubt, finally went fast to sleep.

My landlord was very much more obsequious on the next morning when he met his young guest, having now fully learned his name and quality. Other messengers had come from the castle on the previous night to bring both the young gentlemen home, and poor Mr. William, it appeared, had returned in a wheelbarrow, being not altogether unaccustomed to that mode of conveyance. "He never remembers nothin' about it the next day. He is of a real kind nature, Mr. William," the landlord vowed, "and the men get crowns and half-crowns from him by saying that he beat them overnight when he was in liquor. He's the devil when he's tipsy, Mr. William, but when he is sober he is the very kindest of young gentlemen."

As nothing is unknown to writers of biographies of the present kind, it may be as well to state what had occurred within the walls of Castlewood House, whilst Harry Warrington was without, awaiting some token of recognition from his kinsmen. On their arrival at home the family had found the paper on which the lad's name was inscribed, and his appearance occasioned a little domestic council. My Lord Castlewood supposed that must have been the young gentleman whom they had seen on the bridge, and as they had not drowned him they must invite him. Let a man go down with the proper messages, let a servant carry a note. Lady Fanny thought it would be more civil if one of the brothers would go to their kinsman, especially considering the original greeting which they had given. Lord Castlewood had not the slightest objection to his brother William going—yes, William should go. Upon this Mr William said (with a yet stronger expression) that he would be hanged if he would go. Lady Maria thought the young gentleman whom they had remarked at the bridge was a pretty fellow enough. Castlewood is dreadfully dull, I am sure neither of my brothers do anything to make it amusing. He may be vulgar—no doubt he is vulgar—but let us see the American. Such was Lady Maria's opinion. Lady Castlewood was neither for inviting nor for refusing him, but for delaying. "Wait till your aunt comes, children; perhaps the Baroness won't like to see the young man; at least, let us consult her before we ask him." And so the hospitality to be offered by his nearest kinsfolk to poor Harry Warrington remained yet in abeyance.

At length the equipage of the Baroness Bernstein made its appearance, and whatever doubt there might be as to the reception of the Virginian stranger, there was no lack of enthusiasm in this generous family regarding their wealthy and powerful kinswoman. The state-chamber had already been prepared for her. The cook had arrived the previous day with instructions to get ready a supper for her such as her ladyship liked. The table sparkled with old plate, and was set in the oak dining-room with the pictures of the family round the walls. There was the late Viscount, his father, his mother, his sister,—these two lovely pictures. There was his predecessor by Vandyck, and his Viscountess. There was Colonel Esmond, their relative in Virginia, about whose grandson the ladies and gentlemen of the Esmond family showed such a very moderate degree of sympathy.

The feast set before their aunt, the Baroness, was a very good one, and her ladyship enjoyed it. The supper occupied an hour or two, during which the whole Castlewood family were most attentive to their guest. The Countess pressed all the good dishes upon her, of which she freely partook: the butler no sooner saw her glass empty than he filled it with champagne: the young folks and their mother kept up the conversation, not so much by talking, as by listening appropriately to their friend. She was full of spirits and humour. She seemed to know everybody in Europe, and about those everybodies the wickedest stories. The Countess of Castlewood, ordinarily a very demure, severe woman, and a stickler for the proprieties, smiled at the very worst of these anecdotes; the girls looked at one another and laughed at the maternal signal; the boys giggled and roared with especial delight at their sisters' confusion. They also partook freely of the wine which the butler handed round, nor did they, or their guest, disdain the bowl of smoking punch, which was laid on the table after the supper. Many and many a night, the Baroness said, she had drunk at that table by her father's side. "That was his place," she pointed to the place where the Countess now sat. She saw none of the old plate. That was all melted to pay his gambling debts. She hoped, "Young gentlemen, that *you* don't play?"

"Never, on my word," says Castlewood.

"Never, 'pon honour," says Will, winking at his brother.

The Baroness was very glad to hear they were such good boys. Her face grew redder with the punch; and she became voluble, might have been thought coarse, but that times were different, and those critics were inclined to be especially favourable.

She talked to the boys about their father, their grandfather—other men and women of the house. "The only man of the family was *that*," she said, pointing (with an arm that was yet beautifully round and white) towards the picture of the military gentleman in the red coat and cuirass, and great black periwig.

"The Virginian? What is he good for? I always thought he was good for nothing but to cultivate tobacco and my grandmother," says my lord, laughing.

She struck her hand upon the table with an energy that made the glasses dance. "I say he was the best of you all. There never was one of the male Esmonds that had more brains than a goose, except him. He was not fit for this wicked, selfish old world of ours, and he was right to go and live out of it. Where would your father have been, young people, but for him?"

"Was he particularly kind to our papa?" says Lady Maria.

"Old stories, my dear Maria!" cries the Countess. "I am sure my dear Earl was very kind to him in giving him that great estate in Virginia."

"Since his brother's death, the lad who has been here to-day is heir to that. Mr. Draper told me so! Peste! I don't know why my father gave up such a property."

"*Who* has been here to-day?" asked the Baroness, highly excited.

"Harry Esmond Warrington, of Virginia," my lord answered: "a lad whom Will nearly pitched into the river, and whom I pressed my lady the Countess to invite to stay here."

"You mean that one of the Virginian boys has been to Castlewood, and has not been asked to stay here?"

"There is but one of them, my dear creature," interposes the Earl. "The other, you know, has just been——"

"For shame, for shame!"

"Oh! it ain't pleasant, I confess, to be sc——"

"Do you mean that a grandson of Henry Esmond, the master of this house, has been here, and none of you have offered him hospitality?"

"Since we didn't know it, and he is staying at the Castles?" interposes Will.

"That he is staying at the Inn, and you are sitting *there!*" cries the old lady. "This is too bad—call somebody to me. Get me my hood—I'll go to the boy myself. Come with me this instant, my Lord Castlewood."

The young man rose up, evidently in wrath. "Madame the Baroness of Bernstein," he said, "your ladyship is welcome to go; but as for me, I don't choose to have such words as 'shameful' applied to my conduct. I *won't* go and fetch the young gentleman from Virginia, and I propose to sit here and finish this bowl of punch. Eugene! Don't Eugene me, madam. I know her ladyship has a great deal of money, which you are desirous should remain in our amiable family. You want it more than I do. Cringe for it—I won't." And he sank back in his chair.

The Baroness looked at the family, who held their heads down, and then at my lord, but this time without any dislike. She leaned over to him, and said rapidly in German, "I had unright when I said the Colonel was the only man of the family. Thou canst, if thou willest, Eugene." To which remark my lord only bowed.

"If you do not wish an old woman to go out at this hour of the night, let William, at least, go and fetch his cousin," said the Baroness.

"The very thing I proposed to him."

"And so did we—and so did we!" cried the daughters in a breath.

"I am sure, I only wanted the dear Baroness's consent!" said their mother, "and shall be charmed for my part to welcome our young relative."

"Will! Put on thy pattens, and get a lantern, and go fetch the Virginian," said my lord.

"And we will have another bowl of punch when he comes," says William, who by this time had already had too much. And he went forth—how we have seen; and how he had more punch; and how ill he succeeded in his embassy.

The worthy lady of Castlewood, as she caught sight of young Harry Warrington by the river side, must have seen a very handsome and interesting youth, and very likely had reasons of her own for not desiring his presence in her family. All mothers are not eager to encourage the visits of interesting youths of nineteen in families where there are virgins of twenty. If Harry's acres had been in Norfolk or Devon, in place of Virginia, no doubt the good Countess would have been rather more eager in her welcome. Had she wanted him, she would have given him her hand readily enough. If our people of ton are selfish, at any rate they show they are selfish; and, being cold-hearted, at least have no hypocrisy of affection.

Why should Lady Castlewood put herself out of the way to welcome the young stranger? Because he was friendless? Only a simpleton could ever imagine such a reason as that. People of fashion, like her ladyship, are friendly to those who have plenty of friends. A poor lad, alone, from a distant country, with only very moderate means, and those not as yet in his own power, with uncouth manners very likely, and coarse provincial habits; was a great lady called upon to put herself out of the way for such a youth? *Allons donc!* He was quite as well at the ale-house as at the castle.

This, no doubt, was her ladyship's opinion, which her kinswoman, the Baroness Bernstein, who knew her perfectly well, entirely understood. The Baroness, too, was a woman of the world, and, possibly, on occasion, could be as selfish as any other person of fashion. She fully understood the cause of the deference which all the Castlewood family showed to her—mother, and daughter, and sons,—and being a woman of great humour, played upon the dispositions of the various members of this family, amused herself with their greedinesses, their humiliations, their artless respect for her money-box, and clinging attachment to her purse. They were not very rich; Lady Castlewood's own money was settled on her children. The two elder had inherited nothing but flaxen heads from their German mother, and a pedigree of prodigious distinction. But those who had money, and those who had none, were alike eager for the Baroness's; in this matter the rich are surely quite as greedy as the poor.

So if Madam Bernstein struck her hand on the table, and caused the glasses and the persons round it to tremble at her wrath, it was because she was excited with plenty of punch and champagne, which her ladyship was in the habit of taking freely, and because she may have had a generous impulse when generous wine warmed her blood, and felt indignant as she thought of the poor lad yonder, sitting friendless and lonely on the outside of his ancestors' door; not because she was specially angry with her relatives, who she knew would act precisely as they had done.

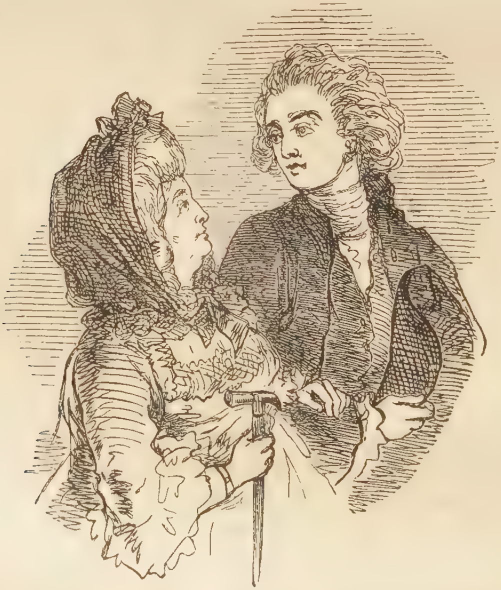
The exhibition of their selfishness and humiliation alike amused her, as did Castlewood's act of revolt. He was as selfish as the rest of the family, but not so mean; and, as he candidly stated, he could afford the luxury of a little independence, having a tolerable estate to fall back upon.

Madam Bernstein was an early woman, restless, resolute, extraordinarily active for her age. She was up long before the languid Castlewood ladies (just home from their London routs and balls), had quitted their feather-beds, or jolly Will had slept off his various potations of punch. She was up, and pacing the green terraces that sparkled with the sweet morning dew, which lay twinkling, also, on a flowery wilderness of trim parterres, and on the crisp walls of the dark box hedges, under which marble fauns and dryads were cooling themselves, whilst a thousand birds sang, the fountains plashed and glittered in the rosy morning sunshine, and the rooks cawed from the great wood.

Had the well-remembered scene (for she had visited it often in childhood) a freshness and charm for her? Did it recall days of innocence and happiness, and did its calm beauty soothe or please, or awaken remorse in her heart? Her manner was more than ordinarily affectionate and gentle, when, presently, after pacing the walks for a half-hour, the person for whom she was waiting came to her. This was our young Virginian, to whom she had despatched an early billet by one of the Lockwoods. The note was signed B. Bernstein, and informed Mr. Esmond Warrington that his relatives at Castlewood, and among them a dear friend of his grandfather, were most anxious that he should come to "*Colonel Esmond's house in England.*" And now, accordingly, the lad made his appearance, passing under the old Gothic doorway, tripping down the steps from one garden terrace to another, hat in hand, his fair hair blowing from his flushed cheeks, his slim figure clad in mourning. The handsome and modest looks, the comely face and person, of the young lad pleased the lady. He made her a low bow which would have done credit to Versailles. She held out a little hand to him, and, as his own palm closed over it, she laid the other hand softly on his ruffle. She looked very kindly and affectionately in the honest blushing face.

"I knew your grandfather very well, Harry," she said. "So you came yesterday to see his picture, and they turned you away, though you know the house was his of right?"

Harry blushed very red. "The servants did not know me. A young gentleman came to me last night," he said, "when I was peevish, and he, I fear, was tipsy. I spoke rudely to my cousin, and would ask his pardon. Your ladyship knows that in Virginia our manners towards strangers are different. I own I had expected another kind of welcome. Was it you, madam, who sent my cousin to me last night?"



"I sent him; but you will find your cousins most friendly to you to-day. You must stay here. Lord Castlewood would have been with you this morning, only I was so eager to see you. There will be breakfast in an hour; and meantime you must talk to me. We will send to the 'Three Castles' for your servant and your baggage.

Give me your arm. Stop, I dropped my cane when you came. *You* shall be my cane."

"My grandfather used to call us his crutches," said Harry.

"You are like him, though you are fair."

"You should have seen—you should have seen George," said the boy, and his honest eyes welled with tears. The recollection of his brother, the bitter pain of yesterday's humiliation, the affectionateness of the present greeting—all, perhaps, contributed to soften the lad's heart. He felt very tenderly and gratefully towards the lady who had received him so warmly. He was utterly alone and miserable a minute since, and here was a home and a kind hand held out to him. No wonder he clung to it. In the hour during which they talked together, the young fellow had poured out a great deal of his honest heart to the kind new-found friend; when the dial told breakfast-time he wondered to think how much he had told her. She took him to the breakfast-room; she presented him to his aunt, the Countess, and bade him embrace his cousins. Lord Castlewood was frank and gracious enough. Honest Will had a headache, but was utterly unconscious of the proceedings of the past night. The ladies were very pleasant and polite, as ladies of their fashion know how to be. How should Harry Warrington, a simple truth-telling lad from a distant colony, who had only yesterday put his foot upon English shore, know that my ladies, so smiling and easy in demeanour, were furious against him, and aghast at the favour with which Madam Bernstein seemed to regard him?

She was *folle* of him, talked of no one else, scarce noticed the Castlewood young people, trotted with him over the house, and told him all its story, showed him the little room in the court-yard where his grandfather used to sleep, and a cunning cupboard over the fire-place which had been made in the time of the Catholic persecutions; drove out with him in the neighbouring country, and pointed out to him the most remarkable sites and houses, and had in return the whole of the young man's story.

This brief biography the kind reader will please to accept, not in the precise words in which Mr. Harry Warrington delivered it to Madam Bernstein, but in the form in which it has been cast in the Chapters next ensuing.

CHAPTER III.

THE ESMONDS IN VIRGINIA.

HENRY ESMOND, ESQ., an officer who had served with the rank of Colonel during the wars of Queen Anne's reign, found himself, at its close, compromised in certain attempts for the restoration of the Queen's family to the throne of these realms. Happily for itself, the nation preferred another dynasty; but some of the few opponents of the house of Hanover took refuge out of the three kingdoms, and amongst others, Colonel Esmond was counselled by his friends to go abroad. As Mr. Esmond sincerely regretted the part which he had taken, and as the august Prince who came to rule over England was the most peaceable of sovereigns, in a very little time the Colonel's friends found means to make his peace.

Mr. Esmond, it has been said, belonged to the noble English family which takes its title from Castlewood, in the county of Hants; and it was pretty generally known that King James II. and his son had offered the title of Marquis to Colonel Esmond and his father, and that the former might have assumed the (Irish) peerage hereditary in his family, but for an informality which he did not choose to set right. Tired of the political struggles in which he had been engaged, and annoyed by family circumstances in Europe, he preferred to establish himself in Virginia, where he took possession of a large estate conferred by King Charles I. upon his ancestor. Here Mr. Esmond's daughter and grandsons were born, and his wife died. This lady, when she married him, was the widow of the Colonel's kinsman, the unlucky Viscount Castlewood, killed in a duel by Lord Mohun, at the close of King William's reign.

Mr. Esmond called his American house Castlewood, from the patrimonial home in the old country. The whole usages of Virginia, indeed, were fondly modelled after the English customs. It was a loyal colony. The Virginians boasted that King Charles II. had been king in Virginia before he had been king in England. English king and English church were alike faithfully honoured there. The resident gentry were allied to good English families. They held their heads above the Dutch traders of New York, and the money-getting Roundheads of Pennsylvania and New England. Never were people less republican than those of the great province which was soon to be foremost in the memorable revolt against the British Crown.

The gentry of Virginia dwelt on their great lands after a fashion almost patriarchal. For its rough cultivation, each estate had a multitude of hands—of purchased and assigned servants—who were subject to the command of the master. The land yielded their food, live stock, and game. The great rivers swarmed with fish for the taking. From their banks the passage home was clear. Their ships took the tobacco off their private wharves on the banks of the Potomac or the James river, and carried it to London or Bristol,—bringing back English goods and articles of home manufacture in return for the only produce which the Virginian gentry chose to cultivate. Their hospitality was boundless. No stranger was ever sent away from their gates. The gentry received one another, and travelled to each other's houses, in a state almost feudal. The question of Slavery was not born at the time of which we write. To be the proprietor of black servants shocked the feelings of no Virginian gentleman; nor, in truth, was the despotism exercised over the negro race generally a savage one. The food was plenty; the poor black people lazy and not unhappy. You might have preached negro emancipation to Madam Esmond of Castlewood as you might have told her to let the horses run loose out of her stables; she had no doubt but that the whip and the corn-bag were good for both.

Her father may have thought otherwise, being of a sceptical turn on very many points, but his doubts did not break forth in active denial, and he was rather disaffected than rebellious. At one period, this gentleman had taken a part in active life at home, and possibly might have been eager to share its rewards; but in latter days he did not seem to care for them. A something had occurred in his life, which had cast a tinge of melancholy over all his existence. He was not unhappy—to those about him most kind—most affectionate, obsequious even to the women of his family, whom he scarce ever contradicted; but there had been some bankruptcy of his heart, which his spirit never recovered. He submitted to life, rather than enjoyed it, and never was in better spirits than in his last hours when he was going to lay it down.

Having lost his wife, his daughter took the management of the Colonel and his affairs; and he gave them up to her charge with an entire acquiescence. So that he had his books and his quiet, he cared for no more. When company came to Castlewood, he entertained them handsomely, and was of a very pleasant, sarcastical turn. He was not in the least sorry when they went away.

"My love, I shall not be sorry to go myself," he said to his daughter, "and you, though the most affectionate of daughters, will console yourself after a while. Why should I, who am so old, be romantic? You may, who are still a young creature." This he said, not meaning all he said, for the lady whom he addressed was a matter-of-fact little person, with very little romance in her nature.

After fifteen years' residence upon his great Virginian estate, affairs prospered so well with the worthy proprietor, that he acquiesced in his daughter's plans for the building of a mansion much grander and more durable than the plain wooden edifice in which he had been content to live, so that his heirs might have a habitation worthy of their noble name. Several of Madam Warrington's neighbours had built handsome houses for themselves; perhaps it was her ambition to take rank in the country, which inspired this desire for improved quarters. Colonel Esmond, of Castlewood, neither cared for quarters nor for quarterings. But his daughter had a very high opinion of the merit and antiquity of her lineage; and her sire, growing exquisitely calm and good-natured in his serene, declining years, humoured his child's peculiarities in an easy, bantering way,—nay, helped her with his antiquarian learning, which was not inconsiderable, and with his skill in the art of painting, of which he was a proficient. A knowledge of heraldry, a hundred years ago, formed part of the education of most noble ladies and gentlemen: during her visit to Europe, Miss Esmond had eagerly studied the family history and pedigrees, and returned thence to Virginia with a store of documents relative to her family on which she relied with implicit gravity and credence, and with the most edifying volumes then published in France and England, respecting the noble science. These works proved, to her perfect satisfaction, not only that the Esmonds were descended from noble Norman warriors, who came into England along with their victorious chief, but from native English of royal dignity: and two magnificent heraldic trees, cunningly painted by the hand of the Colonel, represented the family springing from the Emperor Charlemagne on the one hand, who was drawn in plate-armour, with his imperial mantle and diadem, and on the other from Queen Boadicea, whom the Colonel insisted upon painting in the light costume of an ancient British queen, with a prodigious gilded crown, a trifling mantle of furs, and a lovely symmetrical person, tastefully tattooed with figures of a brilliant blue tint. From these two illustrious stocks the family-tree rose until it united in the thirteenth century somewhere in the person of the fortunate Esmond, who claimed to spring from both.

Of the Warrington family, into which she married, good Madam Rachel thought but little. She wrote herself Esmond Warrington, but was universally called Madam Esmond of Castlewood, when, after her father's decease, she came to rule over that domain. It is even to be feared that quarrels for precedence in the colonial society occasionally disturbed her temper; for, though her father had had a marquis's patent from King James, which he had burned and disowned, she would frequently act as if that document existed and was in full force. She considered the English Esmonds of an inferior dignity to her own branch, and as for the colonial aristocracy, she made no scruple of asserting her superiority over the whole body of them. Hence quarrels and angry words, and even a scuffle or two, as we gather from her notes, at the Governor's assemblies at James Town. Wherefore recall the memory of these squabbles?

Are not the persons who engaged in them beyond the reach of quarrels now, and has not the republic put an end to these social inequalities? Ere the establishment of Independence, there was no more aristocratic country in the world than Virginia; so the Virginians, whose history we have to narrate, were bred to have the fullest respect for the institutions of home, and the rightful king had not two more faithful little subjects than the young twins of Castlewood.

When the boys' grandfather died, their mother, in great state, proclaimed her eldest son George her successor and heir of the estate; and Harry, George's younger brother by half an hour, was always enjoined to respect his senior. All the household was equally instructed to pay him honour: the negroes, of whom there was a large and happy family, and the assigned servants from Europe, whose lot was made as bearable as it might be under the government of the lady of Castlewood. In the whole family there scarcely was a rebel save Mrs. Esmond's faithful friend and companion, Madam Mountain, and Harry's foster-mother, a faithful negro woman, who never could be made to understand why her child should not be first, who was handsomer, and stronger, and cleverer than his brother, as she vowed; though, in truth, there was scarcely any difference in the beauty, strength, or stature of the twins. In disposition, they were in many points exceedingly unlike; but in feature they resembled each other so closely, that, but for the colour of their hair, it had been difficult to distinguish them. In their beds, and when their heads were covered with those vast ribboned nightcaps which our great and little ancestors wore, it was scarcely possible for any but a nurse or a mother to tell the one from the other child.

Howbeit, alike in form, we have said that they differed in temper. The elder was peaceful, studious, and silent; the younger was warlike and noisy. He was quick at learning when he began, but very slow at beginning. No threats of the ferule would provoke Harry to learn in an idle fit, or would prevent George from helping his brother in his lesson. Harry was of a strong military turn, drilled the little negroes on the estate, and caned them like a corporal, having many good boxing-matches with them, and never bearing malice if he was worsted;—whereas George was sparing of blows, and gentle with all about him. As the custom in all families was, each of the boys had a special little servant assigned him; and it was a known fact that George, finding his little wretch of a blackamoor asleep on his master's bed, sat down beside it and brushed the flies off the child with a feather-fan, to the horror of old Gumbo, the child's father, who found his young master so engaged, and to the indignation of Madam Esmond, who ordered the young negro off to the proper officer for a whipping. In vain George implored and entreated—burst into passionate tears, and besought a remission of the sentence. His mother was inflexible regarding the young rebel's punishment, and the little negro went off beseeching his young master not to cry.

A fierce quarrel between mother and son ensued out of this event. Her son would not be pacified. He said the punishment was a shame—a shame; that he was the master of the boy, and no one—no, not his mother—had a right to touch him; that she might order *him* to be corrected, and that he would suffer the punishment, as he and Harry often had, but no one should lay a hand on his boy. Trembling with passionate rebellion against what he conceived the injustice of the procedure, he vowed—actually shrieking out an oath, which shocked his fond mother and governor, who never before heard such language from the usually gentle child—that on the day he came of age he would set young Gumbo free—went to visit the child in the slaves' quarters, and gave him one of his own toys.

The young black martyr was an impudent, lazy, saucy little personage, who would be none the worse for a whipping, as the Colonel no doubt thought; for he acquiesced in the child's punishment when Madam Esmond insisted upon it, and only laughed in his good-natured way when his indignant grandson called out—

"You let mamma rule you in everything, grandpapa."

"Why, so I do," says grandpapa. "Rachel, my love, the way in which I am petticoat-ridden is so evident that even this baby has found it out."

"Then why don't you stand up like a man?" says little Harry, who always was ready to abet his brother.

Grandpapa looked queerly.

"Because I like sitting down best, my dear," he said. "I am an old gentleman, and standing fatigues me."

On account of a certain apish drollery and humour which exhibited itself in the lad, and a liking for some of the old man's pursuits, the first of the twins was the grandfather's favourite and companion, and would laugh and talk out all his infantine heart to the old gentleman, to whom the younger had seldom a word to say. George was a demure studious boy, and his senses seemed to brighten up in the library, where his brother was so gloomy. He knew the books before he could wellnigh carry them, and read in them long before he could understand them. Harry, on the other hand, was all alive in the stables or in the wood, eager for all parties of hunting and fishing, and promised to be a good sportsman from a very early age. Their grandfather's ship was sailing for Europe once when the boys were children, and they were asked, what present Captain Franks should bring them back? George was divided between books and a fiddle; Harry instantly declared for a little gun: and Madam Warrington (as she then was called) was hurt that her elder boy should have low tastes, and applauded the younger's choice as more worthy of his name and lineage. "Books, papa, I can fancy to be a good choice," she replied to her father, who tried to convince her that George had a right to his opinion, "though I am sure you must have pretty nigh all the books in the world already. But I never can desire—I may be wrong, but I never can desire—that my son, and the grandson of the Marquis of Esmond, should be a fiddler."

"Should be a fiddlestick, my dear," the old Colonel answered. "Remember that Heaven's ways are not ours, and that each creature born has a little kingdom of thought of his own, which it is a sin in us to invade. Suppose George loves music? You can no more stop him than you can order a rose not to smell sweet, or a bird not to sing."

"A bird! A bird sings from nature; George did not come into the world with a fiddle in his hand," says Mrs. Warrington, with a toss of her head. "I am sure I hated the harpsichord when a chit at Kensington School, and only learned it to please my mamma. Say what you will, dear sir, I can *not* believe that this fiddling is work for persons of fashion."

"And King David who played the harp, my dear?"

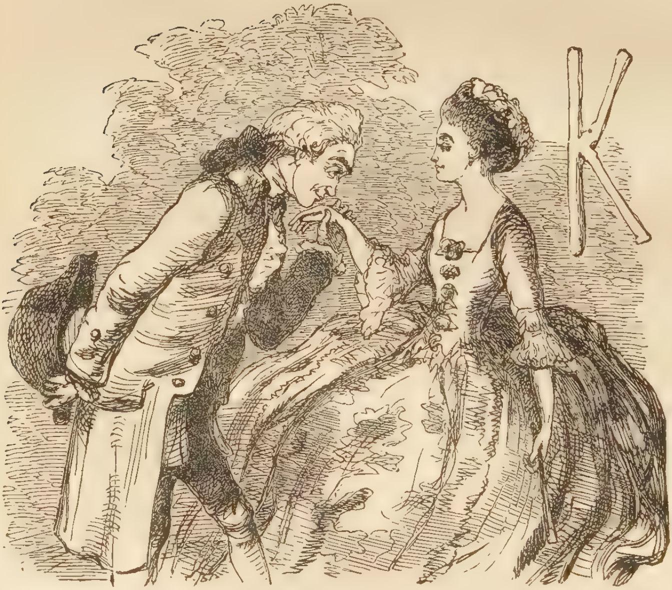
"I wish my papa would read him more, and not speak about him in that way," said Mrs. Warrington.

"Nay, my dear, it was but by way of illustration," the father replied gently. It was Colonel Esmond's nature, as he has owned in his own biography, always to be led by a woman; and, his wife dead, he coaxed and dandled and spoiled his daughter; laughing at her caprices, but humouring them; making a joke of her prejudices, but letting them have their way; indulging, and perhaps increasing, her natural imperiousness of character, though it was his maxim that we can't change dispositions by meddling, and only make hypocrites of our children by commanding them over-much.

At length the time came when Mr. Esmond was to have done with the affairs of this life, and he laid them down as if glad to be rid of their burden. We must not ring in an opening history with tolling bells, or preface it with a funeral sermon. All who read and heard that discourse, wondered where Parson Broadbent of James Town found the eloquence and the Latin which adorned it. Perhaps Mr. Dempster knew, the boys' Scotch tutor, who corrected the proofs of the oration, which was printed, by desire of his Excellency and many persons of honour, at Mr. Franklin's press in Philadelphia. No such sumptuous funeral had ever been seen in the country as that which Madam Esmond Warrington ordained for her father, who would have been the first to smile at that pompous grief. The little lads of Castlewood, almost smothered in black trains and hatbands, headed the procession, and were followed by my Lord Fairfax, from Greenway Court, by his Excellency the Governor of Virginia (with his coach), by the Randolphs, the Careys, the Harrisons, the Washingtons, and many others, for the whole county esteemed the departed gentleman, whose goodness, whose high talents, whose benevolence and unobtrusive urbanity had earned for him the just respect of his neighbours. When informed of the event, the family of Colonel Esmond's stepson, the Lord Castlewood of Hampshire in England, asked to be at the charges of the marble slab which recorded the names and virtues of his lordship's mother and her husband; and after due time of preparation, the monument was set up, exhibiting the arms and coronet of the Esmonds, supported by a little chubby group of weeping cherubs, and reciting an epitaph which for once did not tell any falsehoods.

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH HARRY FINDS A NEW RELATIVE.



KIND friends, neighbours hospitable, cordial, even respectful,—an ancient name, a large estate, and a sufficient fortune, a comfortable home, supplied with all the necessaries and many of the luxuries of life, and a troop of servants, black and white, eager to do your bidding; good health, affectionate children, and, let us humbly add, a good cook, cellar, and library—ought not a person in the possession of all these benefits to be considered very decently happy? Madam Esmond Warrington possessed all these causes for happiness; she reminded herself of them daily in her morning and evening prayers. She was scrupulous in her devotions, good to the poor, never knowingly did anybody a wrong. Yonder I fancy her enthroned in her principality of Castlewood, the country gentlefolks paying her court, the sons dutiful to her, the domestics tumbling over each other's black heels to do her bidding, the poor whites grateful for her bounty and implicitly taking her doses when they were ill, the smaller gentry always acquiescing in her remarks, and for ever letting her win at backgammon—well, with all these benefits, which are more sure than fate allots to most mortals, I don't think the little Princess Pocahontas, as she was called, was to be envied in the midst of her dominions. The Princess's husband, who was cut off in early life, was as well perhaps out of the way. Had he survived his marriage by many years, they would have quarrelled fiercely, or he would infallibly have been a henpecked husband, of which sort there were a few specimens still extant a hundred years ago. The truth is, little Madam Esmond never came near man or woman, but she tried to domineer over them. If people obeyed, she was their very good friend; if they resisted, she fought and fought until she or they gave in. We are all miserable sinners: that's a fact we acknowledge in public every Sunday—no one announced it in a more clear resolute voice than the little lady. As a mortal, she may have been in the wrong, of course; only she very seldom acknowledged the circumstance to herself, and to others never. Her father, in his old age, used to watch her freaks of despotism, haughtiness, and stubbornness, and amuse himself with them. She felt that his eye was upon her; his humour, of which quality she possessed little herself, subdued and bewildered her. But, the Colonel gone, there was nobody else whom she was disposed to obey,—and so I am rather glad for my part that I did not live a hundred years ago at Castlewood in Westmorland County in Virginia. I fancy, one would not have been too happy there. Happy, who is happy? Was not there a serpent in Paradise itself, and if Eve had been perfectly happy beforehand, would she have listened to him?

The management of the house of Castlewood had been in the hands of the active little lady long before the Colonel slept the sleep of the just. She now exercised a rigid supervision over the estate; dismissed Colonel Esmond's English factor and employed a new one; built, improved, planted, grew tobacco, appointed a new overseer, and imported a new tutor. Much as she loved her father, there were some of his maxims by which she was not inclined to abide. Had she not obeyed her papa and mamma during all their lives, as a dutiful daughter should? So ought all children to obey their parents, that their days might be long in the land. The little Queen domineered over her little dominion, and the Princes her sons were only her first subjects. Ere long she discontinued her husband's name of Warrington, and went by the name of Madam Esmond in the country. Her family pretensions were known there. She had no objection to talk of the Marquis's title which King James had given to her father and grandfather. Her papa's enormous magnanimity might induce him to give up his titles and rank to the younger branch of the family, and to her half-brother, my Lord Castlewood and his children; but she and her sons were of the elder branch of the Esmonds, and she expected that they should be treated accordingly. Lord Fairfax was the only gentleman in the colony of Virginia to whom she would allow precedence over her. She insisted on the *pas* before all Lieutenant-Governors' and Judges' ladies; before the wife of the Governor of a colony she would, of course, yield as to the representative of the Sovereign. Accounts are extant, in the family papers and letters, of one or two tremendous battles which Madam fought with the wives of colonial dignitaries upon these questions of etiquette. As for her husband's family of Warrington, they were as naught in her eyes. She married an English baronet's younger son out of Norfolk to please her parents, whom she was always bound to obey. At the early age at which she married—a chit out of a boarding-school—she would have jumped overboard if her papa had ordered. "And that is always the way with the Esmonds," she said.

The English Warringtons were not over-much flattered by the little American Princess's behaviour to them, and her manner of speaking about them. Once a year a solemn letter used to be addressed to the Warrington family, and to her noble kinsmen the Hampshire Esmonds; but a Judge's lady with whom Madam Esmond had quarrelled, returning to England out of Virginia, chanced to meet Lady Warrington, who was in London with Sir Miles attending Parliament, and this person repeated some of the speeches which the Princess Pocahontas was in the habit of making regarding her own and her husband's English relatives, and my Lady Warrington, I suppose, carried the story to my Lady Castlewood; after which the letters from Virginia were not answered, to the surprise and wrath of Madam Esmond, who speedily left off writing also.

So this good woman fell out with her neighbours, with her relatives, and, as it must be owned, with her sons also.

A very early difference which occurred between the Queen and Crown Prince arose out of the dismissal of Mr. Dempster, the lad's tutor and the late Colonel's secretary. In her father's life Madam Esmond bore him with difficulty, or it should be rather said Mr. Dempster could scarce put up with her. She was jealous of books somehow, and thought your book-worms dangerous folks, insinuating bad principles. She had heard that Dempster was a Jesuit in disguise, and the poor fellow was obliged to go build himself a cabin in a clearing, and teach school and practise medicine where he could find customers among the sparse inhabitants of the province. Master George vowed he never would forsake his old tutor, and kept his promise. Harry had always loved fishing and sporting better than books, and he and the poor Dominie had never been on terms of close intimacy. Another cause of dispute presently ensued.

By the death of an aunt, and at his father's demise, the heirs of Mr. George Warrington became entitled to a sum of six thousand pounds, of which their mother was one of the trustees. She never could be made to understand that she was not the proprietor, and not merely the trustee of this money; and was furious with the London lawyer, the other trustee, who refused to send it over at her order. "Is not all I have my sons'?" she cried, "and would I not cut myself into little pieces to serve them? With the six thousand pounds I would have bought Mr. Boulter's estate and negroes, which would have given us a good thousand pounds a year, and made a handsome provision for my Harry." Her young friend and neighbour, Mr. Washington of Mount Vernon, could not convince her that the London agent was right, and must not give up his trust except to those for whom he held it. Madam Esmond gave the London lawyer a piece of her mind, and, I am sorry to say, informed Mr. Draper that he was an insolent pettifogger, and deserved to be punished for doubting the honour of a mother and an Esmond. It must be owned that the Virginian Princess had a temper of her own.

George Esmond, her first-born, when this little matter was referred to him, and his mother vehemently insisted that he should declare himself, was of the opinion of Mr. Washington and Mr. Draper, the London lawyer. The boy said he could not help himself. *He* did not want the money: he would be very glad to think otherwise, and to give the money to his mother, if he had the power. But Madam Esmond would not hear any of these reasons. Feelings were her reasons. Here was a chance of making Harry's fortune—dear Harry, who was left with such a slender younger brother's pittance—and the wretches in London would not help him; his own brother, who inherited all her papa's estate, would not help him. To think of a child of hers being so mean at *fourteen years of age!* &c. &c. Add tears, scorn, frequent inuendo, long estrangement, bitter outbreak, passionate appeals to heaven and the like, and we may fancy the widow's state of mind. Are there not beloved beings of the gentler sex who argue in the same way now-a-days? The book of female logic is blotted all over with tears, and Justice in their courts is for ever in a passion.

This occurrence set the widow resolutely saving for her younger son, for whom, as in duty bound, she was eager to make a portion. The fine buildings were stopped which the Colonel had commenced at Castlewood, who had freighted ships from New York with Dutch bricks, and imported, at great charges, mantelpieces, carved cornice-work, sashes and glass, carpets and costly upholstery from home. No more books were bought. The agent had orders to discontinue sending wine. Madam Esmond deeply regretted the expense of a fine carriage which she had had from England, and only rode in it to church groaning in spirit, and crying to the sons opposite her, "Harry, Harry! I wish I had put by the money for thee, my poor portionless child—three hundred and eighty guineas of ready money to Messieurs Hatchett!"

"You will give me plenty while you live, and George will give me plenty when you die," says Harry, gaily.

"Not unless he changes in *spirit*, my dear," says the lady, with a grim glance at her elder boy. "Not unless heaven softens his heart and teaches him *charity*, for which I pray day and night; as Mountain knows; do you not, Mountain?"

Mrs. Mountain, Ensign Mountain's widow, Madam Esmond's companion and manager, who took the fourth seat in the family coach on these Sundays, said, "Humph! I know you are always disturbing yourself and crying out about this legacy, and I don't see that there is any need."

"Oh, no! no need!" cries the widow, rustling in her silks; "of course I have no need to be disturbed, because my eldest born is *a disobedient son* and an *unkind brother*—because he has an estate, and my poor Harry, bless him, but *a mess of pottage*."

George looked despairingly at his mother until he could see her no more for eyes welled up with tears. "I wish you would bless me, too, O my mother!" he said, and burst into a passionate fit of weeping. Harry's arms were in a moment round his brother's neck, and he kissed George a score of times.

"Never mind, George. *I* know whether you are a good brother or not. Don't mind what she says. She don't mean it."

"I *do* mean it, child," cries the mother. "Would to heaven——"

"HOLD YOUR TONGUE, I SAY!" roars out Harry. "It's a shame to speak so to him, ma'am."

"And so it is, Harry," says Mrs. Mountain, shaking his hand. "You never said a truer word in your life."

"Mrs. Mountain, do you dare to set my children against me?" cries the widow. "From this very day, madam——"

"Turn me and my child into the street? Do," says Mrs. Mountain. "That will be a fine revenge because the English lawyer won't give you the boy's money. Find another companion who will tell you black is white, and flatter you: it is not my way, madam. When shall I go? I shan't be long a-packing. I did not bring much into Castlewood House, and I shall not take much out."

"Hush! the bells are ringing for church, Mountain. Let us try, if you please, and compose ourselves," said the widow, and she looked with eyes of extreme affection, certainly at one—perhaps at both—of her children. George kept his head down, and Harry, who was near, got quite close to him during the sermon, and sat with his arm round his brother's neck.

Harry had proceeded in his narrative after his own fashion, interspersing it with many youthful ejaculations, and answering a number of incidental questions asked by his listener. The old lady seemed never tired of hearing him. Her amiable hostess and her daughters came more than once, to ask if she would ride, or walk, or take a dish of tea, or play a game at cards; but all these amusements Madame Bernstein declined, saying that she found infinite amusement in Harry's conversation. Especially when any of the Castlewood family were present, she redoubled her caresses, insisted upon the lad speaking close to her ear, and would call out to the others, "Hush, my dears! I can't hear our cousin speak." And they would quit the room, striving still to look pleased.

"Are you my cousin too?" asked the honest boy. "You seem kinder than my other cousins."

Their talk took place in the wainscoted parlour, where the family had taken their meals in ordinary for at least two centuries past, and which, as we have said, was hung with portraits of the race. Over Madame Bernstein's great chair was a Kneller, one of the most brilliant pictures of the gallery, representing a young lady of three or four and twenty, in the easy flowing dress and loose robes of Queen Anne's time—a hand on a cushion near her, a quantity of auburn hair parted off a fair forehead, and flowing over pearly shoulders and a lovely neck. Under this sprightly picture the lady sat with her knitting-needles.

When Harry asked, "Are you my cousin, too?" she said, "That picture is by Sir Godfrey, who thought himself the greatest painter in the world. But he was not so good as Lely, who painted your grandmother—my—my Lady Castlewood, Colonel Esmond's wife; nor he so good as Sir Anthony Van Dyck, who painted your great-grandfather, yonder—and who looks, Harry, a much finer gentleman than he was. Some of us are painted blacker than we are. Did you recognise your grandmother in that picture? She had the loveliest fair hair and shape of any woman of her time."

"I fancied I knew the portrait from instinct, perhaps, and a certain likeness to my mother."

"Did Mrs. Warrington—I beg her pardon, I think she calls herself Madam or my Lady Esmond now . . . ?"

"They call my mother so in our province," said the boy.

"Did she never tell you of another daughter her mother had in England, before she married your grandfather?"

"She never spoke of one."

"Nor your grandfather?"

"Never. But in his picture-books, which he constantly made for us children, he used to draw a head very like that above your ladyship. That, and Viscount Francis, and King James III., he drew a score of times, I am sure."

"And the picture over me reminds you of no one, Harry?"

"No, indeed."

"Ah! Here is a sermon!" says the lady, with a sigh. "Harry, that was my face once—yes, it was—and then I was called Beatrix Esmond. And your mother is my half-sister, child, and she has never even mentioned my name!"

CHAPTER V.

FAMILY JARS.

AS Harry Warrington related to his new-found relative the simple story of his adventures at home, no doubt Madam Bernstein, who possessed a great sense of humour and a remarkable knowledge of the world, formed her judgment respecting the persons and events described; and if her opinion was not in all respects favourable, what can be said but that men and women are imperfect, and human life not entirely pleasant or profitable? The court and city-bred lady recoiled at the mere thought of her American sister's countryfied existence. Such a life would be rather wearisome to most city-bred ladies. But little Madam Warrington knew no better, and was satisfied with her life, as indeed she was with herself in general. Because you and I are epicures or dainty feeders, it does not follow that Hodge is miserable with his homely meal of bread and bacon. Madam Warrington had a life of duties and employments which might be hum-drum, but at any rate were pleasant to her. She was a brisk little woman of business, and all the affairs of her large estate came under her cognizance. No pie was baked at Castlewood but her little finger was in it. She set the maids to their spinning, she saw the kitchen wenches at their work, she trotted a-field on her pony, and oversaw the overseers and the negro hands as they worked in the tobacco and corn fields. If a slave was ill, she would go to his quarters in any weather, and doctor him with great resolution. She had a book full of receipts after the old fashion, and a closet where she distilled waters and compounded elixirs, and a medicine-chest which was the terror of her neighbours. They trembled to be ill, lest the little lady should be upon them with her decoctions and her pills.

A hundred years back there were scarce any towns in Virginia; the establishments of the gentry were little villages in which they and their vassals dwelt. Rachel Esmond ruled like a little queen in Castlewood; the princes, her neighbours, governed their estates round about. Many of these were rather needy potentates, living plentifully but in the roughest fashion, having numerous domestics whose liveries were often ragged; keeping open houses, and turning away no stranger from their gates; proud, idle, fond of all sorts of field-sports as became gentlemen of good lineage. The widow of Castlewood was as hospitable as her neighbours, and a better economist than most of them. More than one, no doubt, would have had no objection to share her life-interest in the estate, and supply the place of papa to her boys. But where was the man good enough for a person of her ladyship's exalted birth? There was a talk of making the Duke of Cumberland viceroy, or even king, over America. Madam Warrington's gossips laughed, and said she was waiting for him. She remarked, with much gravity and dignity, that persons of as high birth as his Royal Highness had made offers of alliance to the Esmond family.

She had, as lieutenant under her, an officer's widow who has been before named, and who had been Madam Esmond's companion at school, as her late husband had been the regimental friend of the late Mr. Warrington. When the English girls at the Kensington Academy, where Rachel Esmond had her education, teased and tortured the little American stranger, and laughed at the princified airs which she gave herself from a very early age, Fanny Parker defended and befriended her. They both married ensigns in Kingsley's. They became tenderly attached to each other. It was "my Fanny" and "my Rachel" in the letters of the young ladies. Then, my Fanny's husband died in sad out-at-elbowed circumstances, leaving no provision for his widow and her infant; and, in one of his annual voyages, Captain Franks brought over Mrs. Mountain, in the "Young Rachel," to Virginia.

There was plenty of room in Castlewood House, and Mrs. Mountain served to enliven the place. She played cards with the mistress: she had some knowledge of music, and could help the eldest boy in that way: she laughed and was pleased with the guests: she saw to the strangers' chambers, and presided over the presses and the linen. She was a kind, brisk, jolly-looking widow, and more than one unmarried gentleman of the colony asked her to change her name for his own. But she chose to keep that of Mountain, though, and perhaps because it had brought her no good fortune. One marriage was enough for her, she said. Mr. Mountain had amiably spent her little fortune and his own. Her last trinkets went to pay his funeral; and, as long as Madam Warrington would keep her at Castlewood, she preferred a home without a husband to any which as yet had been offered to her in Virginia. The two ladies quarrelled plentifully; but they loved each other: they made up their differences: they fell out again, to be reconciled presently. When either of the boys was ill, each lady vied with the other in maternal tenderness and care. In his last days and illness, Mrs. Mountain's cheerfulness and kindness had been greatly appreciated by the Colonel, whose memory Madam Warrington regarded more than that of any living person. So that, year after year, when Captain Franks would ask Mrs. Mountain, in his pleasant way, whether she was going back with him that voyage? she would decline, and say that she proposed to stay a year more.

And when suitors came to Madam Warrington, as come they would, she would receive their compliments and attentions kindly enough, and asked more than one of these lovers whether it was Mrs. Mountain he came after? She would use her best offices with Mountain. Fanny was the best creature, was of a good English family, and would make any gentleman happy. Did the Squire declare it was to her and not her dependant that he paid his addresses; she would make him her gravest curtsey, say that she really had been utterly mistaken as to his views, and let him know that the daughter of the Marquis of Esmond lived for her people and her sons, and did not propose to change her condition. Have we not read how Queen Elizabeth was a perfectly sensible woman of business, and was pleased to inspire not only terror and awe, but love in the bosoms of her subjects? So the little Virginian princess had her favourites, and accepted their flatteries, and grew tired of them, and was cruel or kind to them as suited her wayward imperial humour. There was no amount of compliment which she would not graciously receive and take as her due. Her little foible was so well known that the wags used to practise upon it. Rattling Jack Firebrace of Henrico county had free quarters for months at Castlewood, and was a prime favourite with the lady there, because he addressed verses to her which he stole out of the pocket-books. Tom Humbold of Spotsylvania wagered fifty hogsheads against five that he would make her institute an order of knighthood, and won his wager.

The elder boy saw these freaks and oddities of his good mother's disposition, and chafed and raged at them privately. From very early days he revolted when flatteries and compliments were paid to the little lady, and strove to expose them with his juvenile satire; so that his mother would say gravely, "The Esmonds were always of a jealous disposition, and my poor boy takes after my father and mother in this." George hated Jack Firebrace and Tom Humbold, and all their like; whereas Harry went out sporting with them, and fowling, and fishing, and cockfighting, and enjoyed all the fun of the country.

One winter, after their first tutor had been dismissed, Madam Esmond took them to Williamsburg, for such education as the schools and college there afforded, and there it was the fortune of the family to listen to the preaching of the famous Mr. Whitfield, who had come into Virginia, where the habits and preaching of the established clergy were not very edifying. Unlike many of the neighbouring provinces, Virginia was a Church of England colony: the clergymen were paid by the State and had glebes allotted to them; and, there being no Church of England bishop as yet in America, the colonists were obliged to import their divines from the mother-country. Such as came were not, naturally, of the very best or most eloquent kind of pastors. Noblemen's hangers-on, insolvent parsons who had quarrelled with justice or the bailiff, brought their stained cassocks into the colony in the hopes of finding a living there. No wonder that Whitfield's great voice stirred those whom harmless Mr. Broadbent, the Williamsburg chaplain, never could awaken. At first the boys were as much excited as their mother by Mr. Whitfield: they sang hymns, and listened to him with fervour, and, could he have remained long enough among them, Harry and George had both worn black coats probably instead of epaulettes. The simple boys communicated their experiences to one another, and were on the daily and nightly look out for the sacred "call," in the hope or the possession of which such a vast multitude of Protestant England was thrilling at the time.

But Mr. Whitfield could not stay always with the little congregation of Williamsburg. His mission was to enlighten the whole benighted people of the Church, and from the East to the West to trumpet the truth and bid slumbering sinners awaken. However, he comforted the widow with precious letters, and promised to send her a tutor for her sons who should be capable of teaching them not only profane learning, but of strengthening and confirming them in science much more precious.

In due course, a chosen vessel arrived from England. Young Mr. Ward had a voice as loud as Mr. Whitfield's, and could talk almost as readily and for as long a time. Night and evening the hall sounded with his exhortations. The domestic negroes crept to the doors to listen to him. Other servants darkened the porch windows with their crisp heads to hear him discourse. It was over the black sheep of the Castlewood flock that Mr. Ward somehow had the most influence. These woolly lamblings were immensely affected by his exhortations, and, when he gave out the hymn, there was such a negro chorus about the house as might be heard across the Potomac—such a chorus as would never have been heard in the Colonel's time—for that worthy gentleman had a suspicion of all cassocks, and said he would never have any controversy with a clergyman but upon backgammon. Where money was wanted for charitable purposes no man was more ready, and the good, easy Virginian clergyman, who loved backgammon heartily, too, said that the worthy Colonel's charity must cover his other shortcomings.

Ward was a handsome young man. His preaching pleased Madam Esmond from the first, and, I dare say, satisfied her as much as Mr. Whitfield's. Of course it cannot be the case at the present day when they are so finely educated, but women, a hundred years ago, were credulous, eager to admire and believe, and apt to imagine all sorts of excellences in the object of their admiration. For weeks, nay, months, Madam Esmond was never tired of hearing Mr. Ward's great glib voice and voluble common-places: and, according to her wont, she insisted that her neighbours should come and listen to him, and ordered them to be converted. Her young favourite, Mr. Washington, she was especially anxious to influence; and again and again pressed him to come and stay at Castlewood and benefit by the spiritual advantages there to be obtained. But that young gentleman found he had particular business which called him home or away from home, and always ordered his horse of evenings when the time was coming for Mr. Ward's exercises. And—what boys are just towards their pedagogue?—the twins grew speedily tired and even rebellious under their new teacher.

They found him a bad scholar, a dull fellow, and ill bred to boot. George knew much more Latin and Greek than his master, and caught him in perpetual blunders and false quantities. Harry, who could take much greater liberties than were allowed to his elder brother, mimicked Ward's manner of eating and talking, so that Mrs. Mountain and even Madam Esmond were forced to laugh, and little Fanny Mountain would crow with delight. Madam Esmond would have found the fellow out for a vulgar quack but for her son's opposition, which she, on her part, opposed with her own indomitable will. "What matters whether he has more or less of profane learning?" she asked; "in that which is most precious, Mr. W. is able to be a teacher to all of us. What if his manners are a little rough? Heaven does not choose its elect from among the great and wealthy. I wish you knew *one* book, children, as well as Mr. Ward does. It is your wicked pride—the pride of all the Esmonds—which prevents you from listening to him. Go down on your knees in your chamber and pray to be corrected of that dreadful fault." Ward's discourse that evening was about Naaman the Syrian, and the pride he had in his native rivers of Abana and Pharpar, which he vainly imagined to be superior to the healing waters of Jordan—the moral being, that he, Ward, was the keeper and guardian of the undoubted waters of Jordan, and that the unhappy, conceited boys must go to perdition unless they came to him.

George now began to give way to a wicked sarcastic method, which, perhaps, he had inherited from his grandfather, and with which, when a quiet, skilful young person chooses to employ it, he can make a whole family uncomfortable. He took up Ward's pompous remarks and made jokes of them, so that that young divine chafed and almost choked over his great meals. He made Madam Esmond angry, and doubly so when he sent off Harry into fits of laughter. Her authority was defied, her officer scorned and insulted, her youngest child perverted, by the obstinate elder brother. She made a desperate and unhappy attempt to maintain her power.

The boys were fourteen years of age, Harry being taller and much more advanced than his brother, who was delicate, and as yet almost child-like in stature and appearance. The *baculine* method was a quite common mode of argument in those days. Serjeants, schoolmasters, slave-overseers, used the cane freely. Our little boys had been horsed many a day by Mr. Dempster, their Scotch tutor, in their grandfather's time; and Harry, especially, had got to be quite accustomed to the practice, and made very light of it. But, in the interregnum after Colonel Esmond's death, the cane had been laid aside, and the young gentlemen at Castlewood had been allowed to have their own way. Her own and her lieutenant's authority being now spurned by the youthful rebels, the unfortunate mother thought of restoring it by means of coercion. She took counsel of Mr. Ward. That athletic young pedagogue could easily find chapter and verse to warrant the course which he wished to pursue,—in fact, there was no doubt about the wholesomeness of the practice in those days. He had begun by flattering the boys, finding a good berth and snug quarters at Castlewood, and hoping to remain there. But they laughed at his flattery, they scorned his bad manners, they yawned soon at his sermons; the more their mother favoured him, the more they disliked him; and so the tutor and the pupils cordially hated each other. Mrs. Mountain, who was the boys' friend, especially George's friend, whom she thought unjustly treated by his mother, warned the lads to be prudent, and that some conspiracy was hatching against them. "Ward is more obsequious than ever to your mamma. It turns my stomach, it does, to hear him flatter, and to see him gobble—the odious wretch! You must be on your guard, my poor boys—you must learn your lessons, and not anger your tutor. A mischief will come, I know it will. Your mamma was talking about you to Mr. Washington the other day, when I came into the room. I don't like that Major Washington, you know I don't. Don't say—O Mounty! Master Harry. You always stand up for your friends, you do. The Major is very handsome and tall, and he may be very good, but he is much too *old* a young man for me. Bless you, my dears, the quantity of wild oats your father sowed and my own poor Mountain when they were Ensigns in Kingsley's, would fill sacks full! Show me Mr. Washington's wild oats, I say—not a grain! Well, I happened to step in last Tuesday, when he was here with your mamma; and I am sure they were talking about you, for he said, "Discipline is discipline, and must be preserved. There can be but one command in a house, ma'am, and you must be the mistress of yours."

"The very words he used to me," cries Harry. "He told me that he did not like to meddle with other folks' affairs, but that our mother was very angry, dangerously angry, he said, and he begged me to obey Mr. Ward, and specially to press George to do so."

"Let him manage his own house, not mine," says George, very haughtily. And the caution, far from benefiting him, only rendered the lad more supercilious and refractory.

On the next day the storm broke, and vengeance fell on the little rebel's head. Words passed between George and Mr. Ward during the morning study. The boy was quite insubordinate and unjust: even his faithful brother cried out, and owned that he was in the wrong. Mr. Ward kept his temper—to compress, bottle up, cork down, and prevent your anger from present furious explosion, is called keeping your temper—and said he should speak upon this business to Madam Esmond. When the family met at dinner, Mr. Ward requested her ladyship to stay, and, temperately enough, laid the subject of dispute before her.

He asked Master Harry to confirm what he had said: and poor Harry was obliged to admit all the Dominie's statements.

George, standing under his grandfather's portrait by the chimney, said haughtily that what Mr. Ward had said was perfectly correct.

"To be a tutor to such a pupil is absurd," said Mr. Ward, making a long speech, interspersed with many of his usual Scripture phrases, at each of which, as they occurred, that wicked young George smiled, and pished scornfully, and at length Ward ended by asking her honour's leave to retire.

"Not before you have punished this wicked and disobedient child," said Madam Esmond, who had been gathering anger during Ward's harangue, and especially at her son's behaviour.

"Punish!" says George.

"Yes, sir, punish! If means of love and entreaty fail, as they have with your proud heart, other means must be found to bring you to obedience. I punish you now, rebellious boy, to guard you from greater punishment hereafter. The discipline of this family must be maintained. There can be but one command in a house, and I must be the mistress of mine. You will punish this refractory boy, Mr. Ward, as we have agreed that you should do, and if there is the least resistance on his part, my overseer and servants will lend you aid."

In some such words the widow no doubt must have spoken, but with many vehement Scriptural allusions, which it does not become this chronicler to copy. To be for ever applying to the Sacred Oracles, and accommodating their sentences to your purpose—to be for ever taking heaven into your confidence about your private affairs, and passionately calling for its interference in your family quarrels and difficulties—to be so familiar with its designs and schemes as to be able to threaten your neighbour with its thunders, and to know precisely its intentions regarding him and others who differ from your infallible opinion—this was the schooling which our simple widow had received from her impetuous young spiritual guide, and I doubt whether it brought her much comfort.

In the midst of his mother's harangue, in spite of it perhaps, George Esmond felt he had been wrong. "There can be but one command in the house, and you must be mistress—I know who said those words before you," George said, slowly, and looking very white—"and—and I know, mother, that I have acted wrongly to Mr. Ward."

"He owns it! He asks pardon!" cries Harry. "That's right, George! That's enough: isn't it?"

"No, it is *not* enough!" cried the little woman. "The disobedient boy must pay the penalty of his disobedience. When I was headstrong, as I sometimes was as a child before my spirit was changed and humbled, my mamma punished me, and I submitted. So must George. I desire you will do your duty, Mr. Ward."

"Stop, mother!—you don't quite know what you are doing," George said, exceedingly agitated.

"I know that he who spares the rod spoils the child, ungrateful boy!" says Madam Esmond, with more references of the same nature, which George heard, looking very pale and desperate.

Upon the mantelpiece, under the Colonel's portrait, stood a china-cup, by which the widow set great store, as her father had always been accustomed to drink from it. George suddenly took it, and a strange smile passed over his pale face.

"Stay one minute. Don't go away yet," he cried to his mother, who was leaving the room. "You—you are very fond of this cup, mother?"—and Harry looked at him, wondering. "If I broke it, it could never be mended, could it? All the tinkers' rivets would not make it a whole cup again. My dear old grandpapa's cup! I have been wrong. Mr. Ward, I ask pardon. I will try and amend."

The widow looked at her son indignantly, almost scornfully. "I thought," she said, "I thought an Esmond had been more of a man than to be afraid, and"—here she gave a little scream as Harry uttered an exclamation, and dashed forward with his hands stretched out towards his brother.

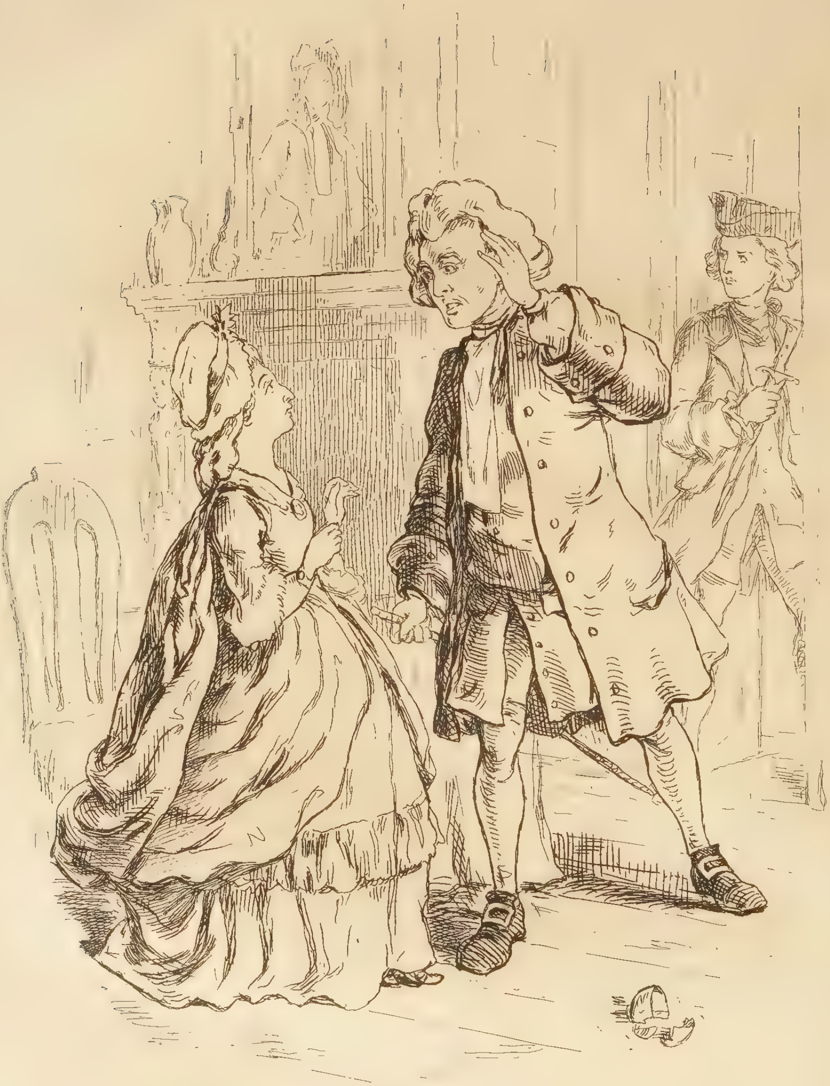
George, after looking at the cup, raised it, opened his hand, and let it fall on the marble slab below him. Harry had tried in vain to catch it.

"It is too late, Hal," George said. "You will never mend that again—never. Now, mother, I am ready, as it is your wish. Will you come and see whether I am afraid? Mr. Ward, I am your servant. Your servant? Your slave! And the next time I meet Mr. Washington, Madam, I will thank him for the advice which he gave you."

"I say, do your duty, sir!" cried Mrs. Esmond, stamping her little foot. And George, making a low bow to Mr. Ward, begged him to go first out of the room to the study.

"Stop! For God's sake, mother, stop!" cried poor Hal. But passion was boiling in the little woman's heart, and she would not hear the boy's petition. "You only abet him, sir!" she cried. "If I had to do it myself, it should be done!" And Harry, with sadness and wrath in his countenance, left the room by the door through which Mr. Ward and his brother had just issued.

The widow sank down on a great chair near it, and sat awhile vacantly looking at the fragments of the broken cup. Then she



THE TUTOR IN TROUBLE.

inclined her head towards the door—one of half-a-dozen of carved mahogany which the Colonel had brought from Europe. For a while there was silence: then a loud outcry, which made the poor mother start.

In another minute Mr. Ward came out, bleeding from a great wound on his head, and behind him Harry, with flaring eyes, and brandishing a little *couteau de chasse* of his grandfather, which hung, with others of the Colonel's weapons, on the library wall.

"I don't care. I did it," says Harry. "I couldn't see this fellow strike my brother; and, as he lifted his hand, I flung the great ruler at him. I couldn't help it. I won't bear it; and if one lifts a hand to me or my brother, I'll have his life," shouts Harry, brandishing the hanger.

The widow gave a great gasp and a sigh as she looked at the young champion and his victim. She must have suffered terribly during the few minutes of the boys' absence; and the stripes which she imagined had been inflicted on the elder had smitten her own heart. She longed to take both boys to it. She was not angry now. Very likely she was delighted with the thought of the younger's prowess and generosity. "You are a very naughty disobedient child," she said, in an exceedingly peaceable voice. "My poor Mr. Ward! What a rebel, to strike you! Papa's great ebony ruler, was it? Lay down that hanger, child. 'Twas General Webb gave it to my papa after the siege of Lille. Let me bathe your wound, my good Mr. Ward, and thank heaven it was no worse. Mountain! Go fetch me some court-plaster out of the middle drawer in the japan cabinet. Here comes George. Put on your coat and waistcoat, child! You were going to take your punishment, sir, and that is sufficient. Ask pardon, Harry, of good Mr. Ward, for your wicked rebellious spirit—I do, with all my heart, I am sure. And guard against your passionate nature, child—and pray to be forgiven. My son, oh, my son!" Here, with a burst of tears which she could no longer control, the little woman threw herself on the neck of her eldest born; whilst Harry, laying the hanger down, went up very feebly to Mr. Ward, and said, "Indeed, I ask your pardon, sir. I couldn't help it; on my honour, I couldn't; nor bear to see my brother struck."

The widow was scared, as after her embrace she looked up at George's pale face. In reply to her eager caresses, he coldly kissed her on the forehead, and separated from her. "You meant for the best, mother," he said, "and I was in the wrong. But the cup is broken; and all the king's horses and all the king's men cannot mend it. There—put the fair side outwards on the mantelpiece, and the wound will not show."

Again Madam Esmond looked at the lad, as he placed the fragments of the poor cup on the ledge where it had always been used to stand. Her power over him was gone. He had dominated her. She was not sorry for the defeat; for women like not only to conquer, but to be conquered; and from that day the young gentleman was master at Castlewood. His mother admired him as he went up to Harry, graciously and condescendingly gave Hal his hand, and said, "Thank you, brother!" as if he were a prince, and Harry a general who had helped him in a great battle.

Then George went up to Mr. Ward, who was still piteously bathing his eye and forehead in the water. "I ask pardon for Hal's violence, sir," George said, in great state. "You see, though we are very young, we are gentlemen, and cannot brook an insult from strangers. I should have submitted, as it was mamma's desire; but I am glad she no longer entertains it."

"And pray, sir, who is to compensate *me?*" says Mr. Ward; "who is to repair the insult done to *me?*"

"We are very young," says George, with another of his old-fashioned bows. "We shall be fifteen soon. Any compensation that is usual amongst gentlemen"———

"This, sir, to a minister of the Word!" bawls out Ward, starting up, and who knew perfectly well the lads' skill in fence, having a score of times been foiled by the pair of them.

"You are not a clergyman yet. We thought you might like to be considered as a gentleman. We did not know."

"A gentleman! I am a Christian, sir!" says Ward, glaring furiously, and clenching his great fists.

"Well, well, if you won't fight, why don't you forgive?" says Harry. "If you don't forgive, why don't you fight? That's what I call the horns of a dilemma." And he laughed his frank, jolly laugh.

But this was nothing to the laugh a few days afterwards, when, the quarrel having been patched up, along with poor Mr. Ward's eye, the unlucky tutor was holding forth according to his custom. He tried to preach the boys into respect for him, to re-awaken the enthusiasm which the congregation had felt for him; he wrestled with their manifest indifference, he implored heaven to warm their cold hearts again, and to lift up those who were falling back. All was in vain. The widow wept no more at his harangues, was no longer excited by his loudest tropes and similes, nor appeared to be much frightened by the very hottest menaces with which he peppered his discourse. Nay, she pleaded headache, and would absent herself of an evening, on which occasion the remainder of the little congregation was very cold indeed. One day then, Ward, still making desperate efforts to get back his despised authority, was preaching on the beauty of subordination, the present lax spirit of the age, and the necessity of obeying our spiritual and temporal rulers. "For why, my dear friends," he nobly asked (he was in the habit of asking immensely dull questions, and straightway answering them with corresponding platitudes), "why are governors appointed, but that we should be governed? Why are tutors engaged, but that children should be taught?" (here a look at the boys). "Why are rulers——" Here he paused, looking with a sad, puzzled face at the young gentlemen. He saw in their countenances the double meaning of the unlucky word he had uttered, and stammered, and thumped the table with his fist. "Why, I say, are rulers——"

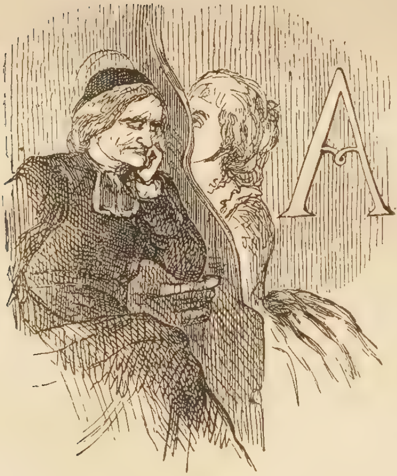
"*Rulers*," says George, looking at Harry.

"Rulers!" says Hal, putting his hand to his eye, where the poor tutor still bore marks of the late scuffle. Rulers, o-ho! It was too much. The boys burst out in an explosion of laughter. Mrs. Mountain, who was full of fun, could not help joining in the chorus; and little Fanny, who had always behaved very demurely and silently at these ceremonies, crowed again, and clapped her little hands at the others laughing, not in the least knowing the reason why.

This could not be borne. Ward shut down the book before him; in a few angry, but eloquent and manly words, said he would speak no more in that place; and left Castlewood not in the least regretted by Madam Esmond, who had doted on him three months before.

CHAPTER VI.

THE VIRGINIANS BEGIN TO SEE THE WORLD.



AFTER the departure of her unfortunate spiritual adviser and chaplain, Madam Esmond and her son seemed to be quite reconciled: but although George never spoke of the quarrel with his mother, it must have weighed upon the boy's mind very painfully, for he had a fever soon after the last recounted domestic occurrences, during which illness his brain once or twice wandered, when he shrieked out, "Broken! Broken! It never, never can be mended!" to the silent terror of his mother, who sat watching the poor child as he tossed wakeful upon his midnight bed. His malady defied her skill, and increased in spite of all the nostrums which the good widow kept in her closet and administered so freely to her people. She had to undergo another humiliation, and one day little Mr. Dempster beheld her at his door on horseback. She had ridden through the snow on her pony, to implore him to give his aid to her poor boy. "I shall bury my resentment, Madam," said he, "as your ladyship buried your pride. Please God, I may be time enough to help my dear young pupil!" So he put up his lancet, and his little provision of medicaments; called his only negro-boy after him, shut up his lonely hut, and once more returned to Castlewood. That night and for some days afterwards it seemed very likely that poor Harry would become heir of Castlewood; but by Mr. Dempster's skill the fever was got over, the intermittent attacks diminished in intensity, and George was restored almost to health again. A change of air, a voyage even to England, was recommended, but the widow had quarrelled with her children's relatives there, and owned with contrition that she had been too hasty. A journey to the north and east was determined on, and the two young gentlemen, with Mr. Dempster as their tutor and a couple of servants to attend them, took a voyage to New York, and thence up the beautiful Hudson river to Albany, where they were received by the first gentry of the province, and thence into the French provinces, where they had the best recommendations, and were hospitably entertained by the French gentry. Harry camped with the Indians, and took furs and shot bears. George, who never cared for field-sports and whose health was still delicate, was a special favourite with the French ladies, who were accustomed to see very few young English gentlemen speaking the French language so readily as our young gentlemen. George especially perfected his accent so as to be able to pass for a Frenchman. He had the *bel air* completely, every person allowed. He danced the minuet elegantly. He learned the latest imported French catches and songs, and played them beautifully on his violin, and would have sung them too but that his voice broke at this time, and changed from treble to bass; and to the envy of poor Harry, who was absent on a bear-hunt, he even had an affair of honour with a young ensign of the regiment of Auvergne, the Chevalier de la Jabotière, whom he pinked in the shoulder, and with whom he afterwards swore an eternal friendship. Madame de Mouchy, the superintendent's lady, said the mother was blest who had such a son, and wrote a complimentary letter to Madam Esmond upon Mr. George's behaviour. I fear Mr. Whitfield would not have been over-pleased with the widow's elation on hearing of her son's prowess.

When the lads returned home at the end of ten delightful months, their mother was surprised at their growth and improvement. George especially was so grown as to come up to his younger-born brother. The boys could hardly be distinguished one from another, especially when their hair was powdered; but that ceremony being too cumbrous for country-life, each of the gentlemen commonly wore his own hair, George his raven black, and Harry his light locks tied with a ribbon.

The reader who has been so kind as to look over the first pages of the lad's simple biography, must have observed that Mr. George

Warrington was of a jealous and suspicious disposition, most generous and gentle and incapable of an untruth, and though too magnanimous to revenge, almost incapable of forgiving any injury. George left home with no good will towards an honourable gentleman, whose name afterwards became one of the most famous in the world; and he returned from his journey not in the least altered in his opinion of his mother's and grandfather's friend. Mr. Washington, though then but just of age, looked and felt much older. He always exhibited an extraordinary simplicity and gravity: he had managed his mother's and his family's affairs from a very early age, and was treated by all his friends and the gentry of his county more respectfully than persons twice his senior.

Mrs. Mountain, Madam Esmond's friend and companion, who dearly loved the two boys and her patroness, in spite of many quarrels with the latter, and daily threats of parting, was a most amusing, droll letter-writer, and used to write to the two boys on their travels. Now, Mrs. Mountain was of a jealous turn likewise; especially she had a great turn for match-making, and fancied that everybody had a design to marry everybody else. There scarce came an unmarried man to Castlewood but Mountain imagined the gentleman had an eye towards the mistress of the mansion. She was positive that odious Mr. Ward intended to make love to the widow, and pretty sure the latter liked him. She knew that Mr. Washington wanted to be married, was certain that such a shrewd young gentleman would look out for a rich wife, and as for the differences of ages, what matter that the Major (major was his rank in the militia) was fifteen years younger than Madam Esmond? They were used to such marriages in the family; my lady her mother was how many years older than the Colonel when she married him?—When she married him and was so jealous that she never would let the poor Colonel out of her sight. The poor Colonel! after his wife, he had been henpecked by his little daughter. And she would take after her mother, and marry again, be sure of that. Madam was a little chit of a woman, not five feet in her highest head-dress and shoes, and Mr. Washington a great tall man of six feet two. Great tall men always married little chits of women: therefore, Mr. W. *must* be looking after the widow. What could be more clear than the deduction?

She communicated these sage opinions to her boy, as she called

George, who begged her, for heaven's sake, to hold her tongue. This she said she could do, but she could not keep her eyes always shut; and she narrated a hundred circumstances which had occurred in the young gentleman's absence, and which tended, as she thought, to confirm her notions. Had Mountain imparted these pretty suspicions to his brother? George asked sternly. No. George was her boy; Harry was his mother's boy. "She likes *him* best, and I like *you* best, George," cries Mountain. "Besides, if I were to speak to him, he would tell your mother in a minute. Poor Harry can keep nothing quiet, and then there would be a pretty quarrel between Madam and me!"

"I beg you to keep *this* quiet, Mountain," said Mr. George, with great dignity, "or you and I shall quarrel too. Neither to me nor to any one else in the world must you mention such an absurd suspicion."

Absurd! Why absurd? Mr. Washington was constantly with the widow. His name was for ever in her mouth. She was never tired of pointing out his virtues and examples to her sons. She consulted him on every question respecting her estate and its management. She never bought a horse or sold a barrel of tobacco without his opinion. There was a room at Castlewood regularly called Mr. Washington's room. He actually leaves his clothes here and his portmanteau when he goes away. "Ah! George, George! One day will come when he *won't* go away," groaned Mountain, who, of course, always returned to the subject of which she was forbidden to speak. Meanwhile Mr. George adopted towards his mother's favourite a frigid courtesy, at which the honest gentleman chafed but did not care to remonstrate, or a stinging sarcasm, which he would break through as he would burst through so many brambles on those hunting excursions in which he and Harry Warrington rode so constantly together; whilst George, retreating to his tents, read mathematics, and French, and Latin, and sulked in his book-room more and more lonely.

Harry was away from home with some other sporting friends (it is to be feared the young gentleman's acquaintances were not all as eligible as Mr. Washington), when the latter came to pay a visit at Castlewood. He was so peculiarly tender and kind to the mistress there, and received by her with such special cordiality, that George Warrington's jealousy had well nigh broken out in open rupture. But the visit was one of adieu, as it appeared. Major Washington was going on a long and dangerous journey, quite to the western Virginia frontier and beyond it. The French had been for some time past making inroads into our territory. The government at home, as well as those of Virginia and Pennsylvania, were alarmed at this aggressive spirit of the lords of Canada and Louisiana. Some of our settlers had already been driven from their holdings by Frenchmen in arms, and the governors of the British provinces were desirous to stop their incursions, or at any rate to protest against their invasion.

We chose to hold our American colonies by a law that was at least convenient for its framers. The maxim was, that whoever possessed the coast had a right to all the territory inland as far as the Pacific; so that the British charters only laid down the limits of the colonies from north to south, leaving them quite free from east to west. The French, meanwhile, had their colonies to the north and south, and aimed at connecting them by the Mississippi and the St. Lawrence and the great intermediate lakes and waters lying to the westward of the British possessions. In the year 1748, though peace was signed between the two European kingdoms, the colonial question remained unsettled, to be opened again when either party should be strong enough to urge it. In the year 1753, it came to an issue, on the Ohio river, where the British and French settlers met. To be sure, there existed other people besides French and British, who thought they had a title to the territory about which the children of their White Fathers were battling, namely, the native Indians and proprietors of the soil. But the logicians of St. James's and Versailles wisely chose to consider the matter in dispute as a European and not a Red-man's question, eliminating him from the argument, but employing his tomahawk as it might serve the turn of either litigant.

A company, called the Ohio Company, having grants from the Virginia government of lands along that river, found themselves invaded in their settlements by French military detachments, who roughly ejected the Britons from their holdings. These latter applied for protection to Mr. Dinwiddie, Lieutenant-Governor of Virginia, who determined upon sending an ambassador to the French commanding officer on the Ohio, demanding that the French should desist from their inroads upon the territories of his Majesty King George.

Young Mr. Washington jumped eagerly at the chance of distinction which this service afforded him, and volunteered to leave his home and his rural and professional pursuits in Virginia, to carry the governor's message to the French officer. Taking a guide, an interpreter, and a few attendants, and following the Indian tracks, in the fall of the year 1753, the intrepid young envoy made his way from Williamsburg almost to the shores of Lake Erie, and found the French commander at Fort le Bœuf. That officer's reply was brief: his orders were to hold the place and drive all the English from it. The French avowed their intention of taking possession of the Ohio. And with this rough answer the messenger from Virginia had to return through danger and difficulty, across lonely forest and frozen river, shaping his course by the compass, and camping at night in the snow by the forest fires.

Harry Warrington cursed his ill fortune that he had been absent from home on a cock-fight, when he might have had chance of sport so much nobler; and on his return from his expedition, which he had conducted with an heroic energy and simplicity, Major Washington was a greater favourite than ever with the lady of Castlewood. She pointed him out as a model to both her sons. "Ah, Harry! she would say, think of you, with your cock-fighting and your racing-matches, and the Major away there in the wilderness, watching the French, and battling with the frozen rivers! Ah, George! learning may be a very good thing, but I wish my eldest son were doing something in the service of his country!"

"I desire no better than to go home and seek for employment, Ma'am," says George. "You surely will not have me serve under Mr. Washington, in his new regiment, or ask a commission from Mr. Dinwiddie?"

"An Esmond can only serve with the king's commission," says Madam, "and as for asking a favour from Mr. Lieutenant-Governor Dinwiddie, I would rather beg my bread."

Mr. Washington was at this time raising such a regiment as with the scanty pay and patronage of the Virginian government, he could get together, and proposed with the help of these men-of-war, to put a more peremptory veto upon the French invaders than the solitary ambassador had been enabled to lay. A small force under another officer, Colonel Trent, had been already despatched to the west, with orders to fortify themselves so as to be able to resist any attack of the enemy. The French troops, greatly outnumbering ours, came up with the English outposts, who were fortifying themselves at a place on the confines of Pennsylvania where the great city of Pittsburg now stands. A Virginian officer with but forty men was in no condition to resist twenty times that number of Canadians, who appeared before his incomplete works. He was suffered to draw back without molestation; and the French, taking possession of his fort, strengthened it, and christened it by the name of the Canadian governor, Du Quesne. Up to this time no actual blow of war had been struck. The troops representing the hostile nations were in presence—the guns were loaded, but no one as yet had cried "Fire." It was strange that in a savage forest of Pennsylvania, a young Virginian officer should fire a shot, and waken up a war which was to last for sixty years, which was to cover his own country and pass into Europe, to cost France her American colonies, to sever ours from us, and create the great Western republic; to rage over the Old World when extinguished in the New; and, of all the myriads engaged in the vast contest, to leave the prize of the greatest fame with him who struck the first blow!

He little knew of the fate in store for him. A simple gentleman, anxious to serve his king and do his duty, he volunteered for the first service, and executed it with admirable fidelity. In the ensuing year he took the command of the small body of provincial troops with which he marched to repel the Frenchmen. He came up with their advanced guard and fired upon them, killing their leader. After this he had himself to fall back with his troops, and was compelled to capitulate to the superior French force. On the 4th of July, 1754, the Colonel marched out with his troops from the little fort where he had hastily entrenched himself (and which they called Fort Necessity), gave up the place to the conqueror, and took his way home.

His command was over; his regiment disbanded after the fruitless, inglorious march and defeat. Saddened and humbled in spirit, the young officer presented himself after a while to his old friends at Castlewood. He was very young; before he set forth on his first campaign he may have indulged in exaggerated hopes of success, and uttered them. "I was angry when I parted from you," he said to George Warrington, holding out his hand, which the other eagerly took. "You seemed to scorn me and my regiment, George. I thought you laughed at us, and your ridicule made me angry. I boasted too much of what we would do."

"Nay, you have done your best, George," says the other, who quite forgot his previous jealousy in his old comrade's misfortune. "Everybody knows that a hundred and fifty starving men with scarce a round of ammunition left, could not face five times their number perfectly armed, and everybody who knows Mr. Washington knows that he would do his duty. Harry and I saw the French in Canada last year. They obey but one will: in our provinces each governor has his own. They were royal troops the French sent against you. . . ."

"Oh, but that some of ours were here!" cries Madam Esmond, tossing her head up. "I promise you a few good English regiments would make the white-coats run."

"You think nothing of the provincials: and I must say nothing now we have been so unlucky," said the Colonel, gloomily. "You made much of me when I was here before. Don't you remember what victories you prophesied for me—how much I boasted myself very likely over your good wine? All those fine dreams are over now. 'Tis kind of your ladyship to receive a poor beaten fellow as you do:" and the young soldier hung down his head.

George Warrington, with his extreme acute sensibility, was touched at the other's emotion and simple testimony of sorrow under defeat. He was about to say something friendly to Mr. Washington, had not his mother, to whom the Colonel had been speaking, replied herself: "Kind of us to receive you, Colonel Washington!" said the widow. "I never heard that when men were unhappy, our sex were less their friends."

And she made the Colonel a very fine curtsey, which straightway caused her son to be more jealous of him than ever.

CHAPTER VII.

PREPARATIONS FOR WAR.

SURELY no man can have better claims to sympathy than bravery, youth, good looks, and misfortune. Madam Esmond might have had twenty sons, and yet had a right to admire her young soldier. Mr. Washington's room was more than ever Mr. Washington's room now. She raved about him and praised him in all companies. She more than ever pointed out his excellences to her sons, contrasting his sterling qualities with Harry's love of pleasure (the wild boy!) and George's listless musings over his books. George was not disposed to like Mr. Washington any better for his mother's extravagant praises. He coaxed the jealous demon within him until he must have become a perfect pest to himself and all the friends round about him. He uttered jokes so deep that his simple mother did not know their meaning, but sat bewildered at his sarcasms, and powerless what to think of his moody, saturnine humour.

Meanwhile, public events were occurring which were to influence the fortunes of all our homely family. The quarrel between the French and English North Americans, from being a provincial, had grown to be a national, quarrel. Reinforcements from France had already arrived in Canada; and English troops were expected in Virginia. "Alas! my dear friend!" wrote Madame la Présidente de Mouchy, from Quebec, to her young friend George Warrington. "How contrary is the destiny to us. I see you quitting the embrace of an adored mother to precipitate yourself in the arms of Bellona. I see you pass wounded after combats. I hesitate almost to wish victory to our lilies when I behold you ranged under the banners of the Leopard. There are enmities which the heart does not recognise—ours assuredly are at peace among these tumults. All here love and salute you as well as Monsieur the Bear-hunter, your brother (that cold Hippolyte who preferred the chase to the soft conversation of our ladies!) Your friend, your enemy, the Chevalier de la Jabotière, burns to meet on the field of Mars his generous rival. M. du Quesne spoke of you last night at supper. M. du Quesne, my husband, send affectuous remembrances to their young friend, with which are ever joined those of your sincere Présidente de Mouchy."

"The banner of the Leopard," of which George's fair correspondent wrote, was, indeed, flung out to the winds, and a number of the king's soldiers were rallied round it. It was resolved to wrest from the French all the conquests they had made upon British dominion. A couple of regiments were raised and paid by the king in America, and a fleet with a couple more was despatched from home under an experienced commander. In February, 1755, Commodore Keppel, in the famous ship "Centurion," in which Anson had made his voyage round the world, anchored in Hampton Roads with two ships of war under his command, and having on board General Braddock, his staff, and a part of his troops. Mr. Braddock was appointed by the Duke. A hundred years ago the Duke of Cumberland was called The Duke par excellence in England—as another famous warrior has since been called. Not so great a Duke certainly was that first-named Prince as his party esteemed him, and surely not so bad a one as his enemies have painted him. A fleet of transports speedily followed Prince William's general, bringing stores, and men, and money in plenty.

The great man landed his troops at Alexandria on the Potomac river, and repaired to Annapolis in Maryland, where he ordered the governors of the different colonies to meet him in council, urging them each to call upon their respective provinces to help the common cause in this strait.

The arrival of the General and his little army caused a mighty excitement all through the provinces, and nowhere greater than at Castlewood. Harry was off forthwith to see the troops under canvas at Alexandria. The sight of their lines delighted him, and the inspiring music of their fifes and drums. He speedily made acquaintance with the officers of both regiments; he longed to join in the expedition upon which they were bound, and was a welcome guest at their mess.

Madam Esmond was pleased that her sons should have an opportunity of enjoying the society of gentlemen of good fashion from England. She had no doubt their company was improving, that the English gentlemen were very different from the horse-racing, cock-fighting Virginian squires, with whom Master Harry would associate, and the lawyers, and pettifoggers, and toad-eaters at the Lieutenant-Governor's table. Madam Esmond had a very keen eye for detecting flatterers in other folks' houses. Against the little knot of official people at Williamsburg, she was especially satirical, and had no patience with their etiquettes and squabbles for precedence.

As for the company of the King's officers, Mr. Harry and his elder brother both smiled at their mamma's compliments to the elegance and propriety of the gentlemen of the camp. If the good lady had but known all, if she could but have heard their jokes and the songs which they sang over their wine and punch, if she could have seen the condition of many of them as they were carried away to their lodgings, she would scarce have been so ready to recommend their company to her sons. Men and officers swaggered the country round, and frightened the peaceful farm and village folk with their riot: the General raved and stormed against his troops for their disorder; against the provincials for their traitorous niggardliness; the soldiers took possession almost as of a conquered country, they scorned the provincials, they insulted the wives even of their Indian allies, who had come to join the English warriors, upon their arrival in America, and to march with them against the French. The General was compelled to forbid the Indian women his camp. Amazed and outraged their husbands retired, and but a few months afterwards their services were lost to him, when their aid would have been most precious.

Some stories against the gentlemen of the camp, Madam Esmond might have heard, but she would have none of them. Soldiers would be soldiers, that everybody knew. Those officers who came over to Castlewood on her sons' invitation were most polite gentlemen, and such indeed was the case. The widow received them most graciously, and gave them the best sport the country afforded. Presently, the General himself sent polite messages to the mistress of Castlewood. His father had served with hers under the glorious Marlborough, and Colonel Esmond's name was still known and respected in England. With her ladyship's permission, General Braddock would have the honour of waiting upon her at Castlewood, and paying his respects to the daughter of so meritorious an officer.

If she had known the cause of Mr. Braddock's politeness, perhaps his compliments would not have charmed Madam Esmond so much. The Commander-in-Chief held levées at Alexandria, and among the gentry of the country who paid him their respects, were our twins of Castlewood, who mounted their best nags, took with them their last London suits, and, with their two negro-boys in smart liveries behind them, rode in state to wait upon the great man. He was sulky and angry with the provincial gentry, and scarce took any notice of the young gentlemen, only asking casually, of his aide-de-camp at dinner, who the young Squire Gawkeys were in blue and gold and red waistcoats?

Mr. Dinwiddie, the Lieutenant-Governor of Virginia, the Agent from Pennsylvania, and a few more gentlemen, happened to be dining with his Excellency. "Oh!" says Mr. Dinwiddie, "those are the sons of the Princess Pocahontas;" on which, with a tremendous oath, the General asked, "Who the deuce was she?"

Dinwiddie, who did not love her, having indeed undergone a hundred pertnesses from the imperious little lady, now gave a disrespectful and ridiculous account of Madam Esmond, made merry with her pomposity and immense pretensions, and entertained General Braddock with anecdotes regarding her, until his Excellency fell asleep.

When he awoke Dinwiddie was gone, but the Philadelphia gentleman was still at table, deep in conversation with the officers there present. The General took up the talk where it had been left when he fell asleep, and spoke of Madam Esmond in curt, disrespectful terms, such as soldiers were in the habit of using in those days, and asking, again, what was the name of the old fool about whom Dinwiddie had been talking? He then broke into expressions of contempt and wrath against the gentry, and the country in general.

Mr. Franklin of Philadelphia repeated the widow's name, took quite a different view of her character from that Mr. Dinwiddie had given, seemed to know a good deal about her, her father, and her estate; as, indeed, he did about every man or subject which came under discussion; explained to the General that Madam Esmond had beeves, and horses, and stores in plenty, which might be very useful at the present juncture, and recommended him to conciliate her by all means. The General had already made up his mind that Mr. Franklin was a very shrewd, intelligent person, and graciously ordered an aide-de-camp to invite the two young men to the next day's dinner. When they appeared he was very pleasant and good-natured; the gentlemen of the General's family made much of them. They behaved, as became persons of their name, with modesty and good-breeding; they returned home delighted with their entertainment, nor was their mother less pleased at the civilities which his Excellency had shown to her boys. In reply to Braddock's message, Madam Esmond penned a billet in her best style, acknowledging his politeness, and begging his Excellency to fix the time when she might have the honour to receive him at Castlewood.

We may be sure that the arrival of the army and the approaching campaign formed the subject of continued conversation in the Castlewood family. To make the campaign was the dearest wish of Harry's life. He dreamed only of war and battle; he was for ever with the officers at Williamsburg: he scoured and cleaned and polished all the guns and swords in the house; he renewed the amusements of his childhood, and had the negroes under arms. His mother, who had a gallant spirit, knew that the time was come when one of her boys must leave her and serve the king. She scarce dared to think on whom the lot should fall. She admired and respected the elder, but she felt that she loved the younger boy with all the passion of her heart.

Eager as Harry was to be a soldier, and with all his thoughts bent on that glorious scheme, he too scarcely dared to touch on the subject nearest his heart. Once or twice when he ventured on it with George, the latter's countenance wore an ominous look. Harry had a feudal attachment for his elder brother, worshipped him with an extravagant regard, and in all things gave way to him as the chief. So Harry saw, to his infinite terror, how George, too, in his grave way, was occupied with military matters. George had the wars of Eugene and Marlborough down from his bookshelves, all the military books of his grandfather, and the most warlike of Plutarch's lives. He and Dempster were practising with the foils again. The old Scotchman was an adept in the military art, though somewhat shy of saying where he learned it.

Madam Esmond made her two boys the bearers of the letter in reply to his Excellency's message, accompanying her note with such large and handsome presents for the General's staff and the officers of the two Royal Regiments, as caused the General more than once to thank Mr. Franklin for having been the means of bringing this welcome ally into the camp. "Would not one of the young gentlemen like to see the campaign?" the General asked. "A friend of theirs, who often spoke of them—Mr. Washington, who had been unlucky in the affair of last year—had already promised to join him as aide-de-camp, and his Excellency would gladly take another young Virginian gentleman into his family." Harry's eyes brightened and his face flushed at this offer. "He would like with all his heart to go!" he cried out. George said, looking hard at his younger brother, that one of them would be proud to attend his Excellency, whilst it would be the other's duty to take care of their mother at home. Harry allowed his senior to speak. His will was even still obedient to George's. However much he desired to go, he would not pronounce until George had declared himself. He longed so for the campaign, that the actual wish made him timid. He dared not speak on the matter as he went home with George. They rode for miles in silence, or strove to talk upon indifferent subjects; each knowing what was passing in the other's mind, and afraid to bring the awful question to an issue.

On their arrival at home the boys told their mother of General Braddock's offer. "I knew it must happen," she said; "at such a crisis in the country our family must come forward. Have you—have you settled yet which of you is to leave me?" and she looked anxiously from one to another, dreading to hear either name.

"The youngest ought to go, mother; of course I ought to go!" cries Harry, turning very red.

"Of course, he ought," said Mrs. Mountain, who was present at their talk.

"There! Mountain says so! I told you so!" again cries Harry, with a sidelong look at George.

"The head of the family ought to go, mother," says George, sadly.

"No! no! you are ill, and have never recovered your fever. Ought he to go, Mountain?"

"You would make the best soldier, I know that, dearest Hal. You and George Washington are great friends, and could travel well together, and he does not care for me, nor I for him, however much he is admired in the family. But, you see, 'tis the law of Honour, my Harry." (He here spoke to his brother with a voice of extraordinary kindness and tenderness.) "The grief I have had in this matter has been that I must refuse thee. I must go. Had Fate given you the benefit of that extra half-hour of life which I have had before you, it would have been your lot, and you would have claimed your right to go first, you know you would."

"Yes, George," said poor Harry, "I own I should."

"You will stay at home, and take care of Castlewood and our mother. If anything happens to me, you are here to fill my place. I would like to give way, my dear, as you, I know, would lay down your life to serve me. But each of us must do his duty. What would our grandfather say if he were here?"

The mother looked proudly at her two sons. "My papa would say that his boys were gentlemen," faltered Madam Esmond, and left the young men, not choosing, perhaps, to show the emotion which was filling her heart. It was speedily known amongst the servants that Mr. George was going on the campaign. Dinah, George's foster-mother, was loud in her lamentations at losing him; Phillis, Harry's old nurse, was as noisy because Master George, as usual, was preferred over Master Harry. Sady, George's servant, made preparations to follow his master, bragging incessantly of the deeds which he would do; while Gumbo, Harry's boy, pretended to whimper at being left behind, though, at home, Gumbo was anything but a fire-eater.

But, of all in the house, Mrs. Mountain was the most angry at George's determination to go on the campaign. She had no patience with him. He did not know what he was doing by leaving home. She begged, implored, insisted that he should alter his determination; and voted that nothing but mischief would come from his departure.

George was surprised at the pertinacity of the good lady's opposition. "I know, Mountain," said he, "that Harry would be the better soldier; but, after all, to go is my duty."

"To stay is your duty!" says Mountain, with a stamp of her foot.

"Why did not my mother own it when we talked of the matter just now?"

"Your mother!" says Mrs. Mountain, with a most gloomy, sardonic laugh; "your mother, my poor child!"

"What is the meaning of that mournful countenance, Mountain?"

"It may be that your mother wishes you away, George!" Mrs. Mountain continued, wagging her head. "It may be, my poor deluded boy, that you will find a father-in-law when you come back."

"What in heaven do you mean?" cried George, the blood rushing into his face.

"Do you suppose I have no eyes, and cannot see what is going on? I tell you, child, that Colonel Washington wants a rich wife. When you are gone, he will ask your mother to marry him, and you will find him master here when you come back. That is why you ought not to go away, you poor, unhappy, simple boy! Don't you see how fond she is of him? how much she makes of him? how she is always holding him up to you, to Harry, to everybody who comes here?"

"But he is going on the campaign, too," cried George.

"He is going on the marrying campaign, child!" insisted the widow.

"Nay; General Braddock himself told me that Mr. Washington had accepted the appointment of aide-de-camp."

"An artifice! an artifice to blind you, my poor child!" cries Mountain. "He will be wounded and come back—you will see if he does not. I have proofs of what I say to you—proofs under his own hand—look here!" And she took from her pocket a piece of paper in Mr. Washington's well-known handwriting.

"How came you by this paper?" asked George, turning ghastly pale.

"I—I found it in the Major's chamber!" says Mrs. Mountain, with a shamefaced look.

"You read the private letters of a guest staying in our house?" cried George. "For shame! I will not look at the paper!" And he flung it from him on to the fire before him.

"I could not help it, George; 'twas by chance, I give you my word, by the merest chance. You know Governor Dinwiddie is to have the Major's room, and the state-room is got ready for Mr. Braddock, and we are expecting ever so much company, and I had to take the things which the Major leaves here—he treats the house just as if it was his own already—into his new room, and this half-sheet of paper fell out of his writing-book, and I just gave one look at it by the merest chance, and when I saw what it was it was my duty to read it."

"Oh, you are a martyr to duty, Mountain!" George said grimly. "I dare say Mrs. Bluebeard thought it was her duty to look through the keyhole."

"I never *did* look through the keyhole, George. It's a shame you should say so! I, who have watched and tended, and nursed you, like a mother; who have sat up whole weeks with you in fevers, and carried you from your bed to the sofa in these arms. There, sir, I don't want you there *now*. My dear Mountain, indeed! Don't tell me! You fly into a passion, and call names, and wound my feelings, who have loved you like your mother—like your mother?—I only hope she may love you half as well. I say you are all ungrateful. My Mr. Mountain was a wretch, and every one of you is as bad."

There was but a smouldering log or two in the fire-place, and no doubt Mountain saw that the paper was in no danger as it lay amongst the ashes, or she would have seized at it the risk of burning her own fingers, and ere she uttered the above passionate defence of her conduct. Perhaps George was absorbed in his dismal thoughts; perhaps his jealousy overpowered him, for he did not resist any further when she stooped down and picked up the paper.

"You should thank your stars, child, that I saved the letter," cried she. "See! here are his own words, in his great big handwriting like a clerk. It was not my fault that he wrote them, or that I found them. Read for yourself, I say, George Warrington, and be thankful that your poor dear old Mounty is watching over you!"

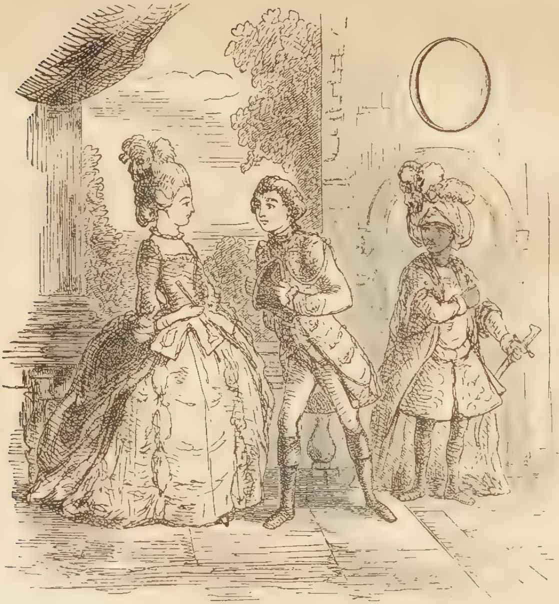
Every word and letter upon the unlucky paper was perfectly clear. George's eyes could not help taking in the contents of the document before him. "Not a word of this, Mountain," he said, giving her a frightful look. "I—I will return this paper to Mr. Washington."

Mountain was scared at his face, at the idea of what she had done, and what might ensue. When his mother, with alarm in her countenance, asked him at dinner what ailed him that he looked so pale? "Do you suppose, Madam," says he, filling himself a great bumper of wine, "that to leave such a tender mother as you does not cause me cruel grief?"

The good lady could not understand his words, his strange, fierce looks, and stranger laughter. He bantered all at the table; called to the servants and laughed at them, and drank more and more. Each time the door was opened, he turned towards it; and so did Mountain, with a guilty notion that Mr. Washington would step in.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH GEORGE SUFFERS FROM A COMMON DISEASE.



ON the day appointed for Madam Esmond's entertainment to the General, the house of Castlewood was set out with the greatest splendour; and Madam Esmond arrayed herself in a much more magnificent dress than she was accustomed to wear. Indeed, she wished to do every honour to her guest, and to make the entertainment—which, in reality, was a sad one to her—as pleasant as might be for her company. The General's new aide-de-camp was the first to arrive. The widow received him in the covered gallery before the house. He dismounted at the steps, and his servants led away his horses to the well-known quarters. No young gentleman in the colony was better mounted or a better horseman than Mr. Washington.

For awhile ere the Colonel retired to divest himself of his riding-boots, he and his hostess paced the gallery in talk. She had much to say to him; she had to hear from him a confirmation of his own appointment as aide-de-camp to General Braddock, and to speak of her son's approaching departure. The negro-servants bearing the dishes for the approaching feast were passing perpetually as they talked. They descended the steps down to the rough lawn in front of the house, and paced awhile in the shade. Mr. Washington announced his Excellency's speedy approach, with Mr. Franklin of Pennyslvania in his coach.

This Mr. Franklin had been a common printer's boy, Mrs. Esmond had heard; a pretty pass things were coming to when such persons rode in the coach of the Commander-in-Chief! Mr. Washington said, a more shrewd and sensible gentleman never rode in coach or walked on foot. Mrs. Esmond thought the Colonel was too liberally disposed towards this gentleman; but Mr. Washington stoutly maintained against the widow that the printer was a most ingenious, useful, and meritorious man.

"I am glad, at least, that, as my boy is going to make the campaign, he will not be with tradesmen, but with gentlemen, with gentlemen of honour and fashion," says Madam Esmond, in her most stately manner.

Mr. Washington had seen the gentlemen of honour and fashion over their cups, and perhaps thought that all their sayings and doings were not precisely such as would tend to instruct or edify a young man on his entrance into life; but he wisely chose to tell no tales out of school, and said that Harry and George, now they were coming into the world, must take their share of good and bad, and hear what both sorts had to say.

"To be with a veteran officer of the finest army in the world," faltered the widow; "with gentlemen who have been bred in the midst of the Court; with friends of his Royal Highness, the Duke——"

The widow's friend only inclined his head. He did not choose to allow his countenance to depart from its usual handsome gravity.

"And with you, dear Colonel Washington, by whom my father always set such store. You don't know how much he trusted in you. You will take care of my boy, sir, will not you? You are but five years older, yet I trust to you more than to his seniors; my father always told the children, I always bade them, to look up to Mr. Washington."

"You know I would have done anything to win Colonel Esmond's favour. Madam, how much would I not venture to merit his daughter's?"

The gentleman bowed with not too ill a grace. The lady blushed, and dropped one of the lowest curtseys. (Madam Esmond's curtsey was considered unrivalled over the whole province.) "Mr. Washington," she said, "will be always sure of a mother's affection, whilst he gives so much of his to her children." And so saying she gave him her hand, which he kissed with profound politeness. The little lady presently re-entered her mansion, leaning upon the tall young officer's arm. Here they were joined by George, who came to them, accurately powdered and richly attired, saluting his parent and his friend alike with low and respectful bows. Now-a-days, a young man walks into his mother's room with hob-nailed high-lows, and a wide-awake on his head; and instead of making her a bow, puffs a cigar into her face.

But George, though he made the lowest possible bow to Mr. Washington and his mother, was by no means in good humour with either of them. A polite smile played round the lower part of his countenance, whilst watchfulness and wrath glared out from the two upper windows. What had been said or done? Nothing that might not have been performed or uttered before the most decent, polite, or pious company. Why then should Madam Esmond continue to blush, and the brave Colonel to look somewhat red, as he shook his young friend's hand?

The Colonel asked Mr. George if he had had good sport? "No," says George, curtly. "Have you?" And then he looked at the picture of his father, which hung in the parlour.

The Colonel, not a talkative man ordinarily, straightway entered into a long description of his sport, and described where he had been in the morning, and what woods he had hunted with the king's officers; how many birds they had shot, and what game they had brought down. Though not a jocular man ordinarily, the Colonel made a long description of Mr. Braddock's heavy person and great boots, as he floundered through the Virginian woods, hunting, as they called it, with a pack of dogs gathered from various houses, with a pack of negroes barking as loud as the dogs, and actually shooting the deer when they came in sight of him. "Great God, sir!" says Mr. Braddock, puffing and blowing, "what would Sir Robert have said in Norfolk, to see a man hunting with a fowling-piece in his hand, and a pack of dogs actually laid on to a turkey!"

"Indeed, Colonel, you are vastly comical this afternoon!" cries Madam Esmond, with a neat little laugh, whilst her son listened to the story, looking more glum than ever. "What Sir Robert is there at Norfolk? Is he one of the newly arrived army-gentlemen?"

"The General meant Norfolk at home, Madam, not Norfolk in Virginia," said Colonel Washington. "Mr. Braddock had been talking of a visit to Sir Robert Walpole, who lived in that county, and of the great hunts the old Minister kept there, and of his grand palace, and his pictures at Houghton. I should like to see a good field and a good fox-chase at home better than any sight in the world," the honest sportsman added with a sigh.

"Nevertheless, there is good sport here, as I was saying," said young Esmond, with a sneer.

"What sport?" cries the other, looking at him.

"Why, sure you know, without looking at me so fiercely, and stamping your foot, as if you were going to charge me with the foils. Are you not the best sportsman of the country-side? Are there not all the fish of the field, and the beasts of the trees, and the fowls of the sea—no—the fish of the trees, and the beasts of the sea—and the —bah! You know what I mean. I mean shad, and salmon, and rockfish, and roe-deer, and hogs, and buffaloes, and bisons, and elephants, for what I know. I'm no sportsman."

"No, indeed," said Mr. Washington, with a look of scarcely repressed scorn.

"Yes, I understand you. I am a milksop. I have been bred at my mamma's knee. Look at these pretty apron-strings, Colonel! Who would not like to be tied to them? See of what a charming colour they are! I remember when they were black—that was for my grandfather."

"And who would not mourn for such a gentleman?" said the Colonel, as the widow, surprised, looked at her son.

"And, indeed, I wish my grandfather were here, and would resurge, as he promises to do on his tombstone; and would bring my father, the Ensign, with him."

"Ah, Harry!" cries Mrs. Esmond, bursting into tears, as at this juncture her second son entered the room—in just such another suit, gold-corded frock, braided waistcoat, silver-hilted sword, and solitaire as that which his elder brother wore. "Oh, Harry, Harry!" cries Madam Esmond, and flies to her younger son.

"What is it, mother?" asks Harry, taking her in his arms. "What is the matter, Colonel?"

"Upon my life, it would puzzle me to say," answered the Colonel, biting his lips.

"A mere question, Hal, about pink ribbons, which I think vastly becoming to our mother; as, no doubt, the Colonel does."

"Sir, will you please to speak for yourself?" cried the Colonel, bustling up, and then sinking his voice again.

"He speaks too much for himself," wept the widow.

"I protest I don't any more know the source of these tears, than the source of the Nile," said George, "and if the picture of my father were to begin to cry, I should almost as much wonder at the paternal tears. What have I uttered? An allusion to ribbons! Is there some poisoned pin in them, which has been stuck into my mother's heart by a guilty fiend of a London mantua-maker? I professed to wish to be led in these lovely reins all my life long," and he turned a pirouette on his scarlet heels.

"George Warrington! what devil's dance are you dancing now?" asked Harry, who loved his mother, who loved Mr. Washington, but who, of all creatures, loved and admired his brother George.

"My dear child, you do not understand dancing—you care not for the politer arts—you can get no more music out of a spinnet than by pulling a dead hog by the ear. By nature you were made for a man—a man of war—I do not mean a seventy-four, Colonel George, like that hulk which brought the hulking Mr. Braddock into our river. His Excellency, too, is a man of warlike turn, a follower of the sports of the field. I am a milksop, as I have had the honour to say."

"You never showed it yet. You beat that great Maryland man was twice your size," breaks out Harry.

"Under compulsion, Harry. 'Tis *tupto*, my lad, or else 'tis *tuptomai*, as thy breech well knew when we followed school. But I am of a quiet turn, and would never lift my hand to pull a trigger, no, nor a nose, nor anything but a rose," and here he took and handled one of Madam Esmond's bright pink apron ribbons. "I hate sporting, which you and the Colonel love, and I want to shoot nothing alive, not a turkey, nor a titmouse, nor an ox, nor an ass, nor anything that has ears. Those curls of Mr. Washington's are prettily powdered."

The militia colonel, who had been offended by the first part of the talk, and very much puzzled by the last, had taken a modest draught from the great china bowl of apple toddy which stood to welcome the guests in this as in all Virginian houses, and was further cooling himself by pacing the balcony in a very stately manner.

Again almost reconciled with the elder, the appeased mother stood giving a hand to each of her sons. George put his disengaged hand on Harry's shoulder. "I say one thing, George," says he with a flushing face.

"Say twenty things, Don Enrico," cries the other.

"If you are not fond of sporting and that, and don't care for killing game and hunting, being cleverer than me, why shouldst thou not stop at home and be quiet, and let me go out with Colonel George and Mr. Braddock?—that's what I say," says Harry, delivering himself of his speech.

The widow looked eagerly from the dark-haired to the fair-haired boy. She knew not from which she would like to part.

"One of our family must go because honneur oblige, and my name being number one, number one must go first," says George.

"Told you so," said poor Harry.

"One must stay, or who is to look after mother at home? We cannot afford to be both scalped by Indians or fricasseed by French."

"Fricasseed by French!" cries Harry; "the best troops of the world, Englishmen! I should like to see them fricasseed by the French! What a mortal thrashing you will give them!" and the brave lad sighed to think he should not be present at the *battue*.

George sat down to the harpsichord and played and sang "Malbrook s'en va t'en guerre Mironton mironton mirontaine," at the sound of which music the gentleman from the balcony entered. "I am playing 'God save the King,' Colonel, in compliment to the new expedition."

"I never know whether thou art laughing or in earnest," said the simple gentleman, "but surely methinks that is not the air."

George performed ever so many trills and quavers upon his harpsichord, and their guest watched him, wondering, perhaps, that a gentleman of George's condition could set himself to such an effeminate business. Then the Colonel took out his watch, saying that his Excellency's coach would be here almost immediately, and asking leave to retire to his apartment, and put himself in a fit condition to appear before her ladyship's company.

"Colonel Washington knows the way to his room pretty well!" said George, from the harpsichord, looking over his shoulder, but never offering to stir.

"Let *me* show the Colonel to his chamber," cried the widow, in great wrath, and sailed out of the apartment, followed by the enraged and bewildered Colonel, as George continued crashing among the keys. Her high-spirited guest felt himself insulted, he could hardly say how; he was outraged and he could not speak; he was almost stifling with anger.

Harry Warrington remarked their friend's condition. "For heaven's sake, George, what does this all mean?" he asked his brother. "Why shouldn't he kiss her hand?" (George had just before fetched out his brother from their library, to watch this harmless salute.) "I tell you it is nothing but common kindness."

"Nothing but common kindness!" shrieked out George. "Look at that, Hal! Is that common kindness?" and he showed his junior the unlucky paper over which he had been brooding for some time. It was but a fragment, though the meaning was indeed clear without the preceding text.

The paper commenced . . . "*is older than myself, but I, again, am older than my years; and you know, dear brother, have ever been considered a sober person. All children are better for a father's superintendence, and her two, I trust, will find in me a tender friend and guardian.*"

"Friend and guardian! Curse him!" shrieked out George, clenching his fists—and his brother read on:

" . . . *The flattering offer which General Braddock hath made me, will, of course, oblige me to postpone this matter until after the campaign. When we have given the French a sufficient drubbing, I shall return to repose under my own vine and fig-tree.*"

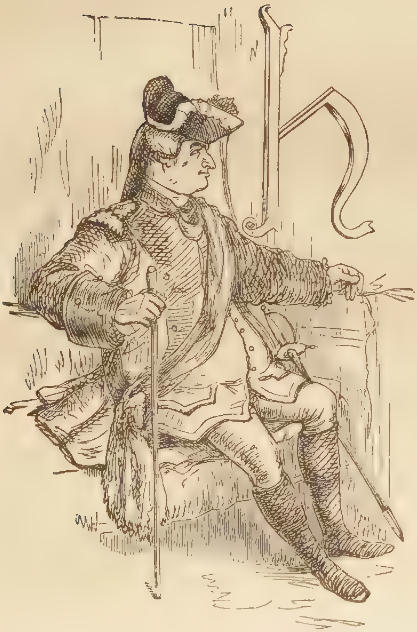
"He means Castlewood. *These* are his vines," George cries again, shaking his fist at the creepers sunning themselves on the wall.

" . . . *Under my own vine and fig-tree; where I hope soon to present my dear brother to his new sister-in-law. She has a pretty Scripture name, which is* . . . "—and here the document ended.

"Which is Rachel," George went on bitterly. "Rachel is by no means weeping for her children, and has every desire to be comforted. Now, Harry! Let us upstairs at once, kneel down as becomes us, and say, 'Dear papa, welcome to your house of Castlewood.'"

CHAPTER IX.

HOSPITALITIES.



HIS EXCELLENCY the Commander-in-Chief set forth to pay his visit to Madam Esmond in such a state and splendour as became the first personage in all his Majesty's colonies, plantations, and possessions of North America. His guard of dragoons preceded him out of Williamsburg in the midst of an immense shouting and yelling of a loyal, and principally negro, population. The General rode in his own coach. Captain Talmadge, his Excellency's Master of the Horse, attended him at the door of the ponderous emblazoned vehicle, riding by the side of the carriage during the journey from Williamsburg to Madam Esmond's house. Major Danvers, aide-de-camp, sat in the front of the carriage with the little postmaster from Philadelphia, Mr. Franklin, who, printer's boy as he had been, was a wonderful shrewd person, as his Excellency and the gentlemen of his family were fain to acknowledge, having a quantity of the most curious information respecting the colony, and regarding England too, where Mr. Franklin had been more than once. "'Twas extraordinary how a person of such humble origin should have acquired such a variety of learning and such a politeness of breeding too, Mr. Franklin!"

his Excellency was pleased to observe, touching his hat graciously to the postmaster.

The postmaster bowed, said it had been his occasional good fortune to fall into the company of gentlemen like his Excellency, and that he had taken advantage of his opportunity to study their honours' manners, and adapt himself to them as far as he might. As for education, he could not boast much of that—his father being but in straitened circumstances, and the advantages small in his native country of New England: but he had done to the utmost of his power, and gathered what he could—he knew nothing like what they had in England.

Mr. Braddock burst out laughing, and said, "As for education, there were gentlemen of the army, by George, who didn't know whether they should spell bull with two b's or one. He had heard the Duke of Marlborough was no special good penman. He had not the honour of serving under that noble commander—his Grace was before his time—but he thrashed the French soundly, although he was no scholar."

Mr. Franklin said he was aware of both those facts.

"Nor is *my* Duke a scholar," went on Mr. Braddock—"aha, Mr. Postmaster, you have heard that, too—I see by the wink in your eye."

Mr. Franklin instantly withdrew the obnoxious or satirical wink in his eye, and looked into the General's jolly round face with a pair of orbs as innocent as a baby's. "He's no scholar, but he is a match for any French general that ever swallowed the English for *fricassée de crapaud*. He saved the crown for the best of kings, his royal father, his Most Gracious Majesty King George."

Off went Mr. Franklin's hat, and from his large buckled wig escaped a great halo of powder.

"He is the soldier's best friend, and has been the uncompromising enemy of all beggarly red-shanked Scotch rebels and intriguing Romish Jesuits who would take our liberty from us, and our religion by George. His royal highness, my gracious master, is not a scholar neither, but he is one of the finest gentlemen in the world."

"I have seen his royal highness on horseback, at a review of the Guards, in Hyde Park," says Mr. Franklin. "The Duke is indeed a very fine gentleman on horseback."

"You shall drink his health to-day, Postmaster. He is the best of masters, the best of friends, the best of sons to his royal old father; the best of gentlemen that ever wore an epaulet."

"Epaulets are quite out of my way, sir," says Mr. Franklin, laughing. "You know I live in a Quaker city."

"Of course they are out of your way, my good friend. Every man to his business. You, and gentlemen of your class, to your books, and welcome. We don't forbid you; we encourage you. We, to fight the enemy and govern the country. Hey, gentlemen? Lord! what roads you have in this colony, and how this confounded coach plunges! Who have we here, with the two negro boys in livery? He rides a good gelding."

"It is Mr. Washington," says the aide-de-camp.

"I would like him for a corporal of the Horse Grenadiers," said the General. "He has a good figure on a horse. He knows the country too, Mr. Franklin."

"Yes, indeed."

"And is a monstrous genteel young man, considering the opportunities he has had. I should have thought he had the polish of Europe, by George I should."

"He does his best," says Mr. Franklin, looking innocently at the stout chief, the exemplar of English elegance, who sat swagging from one side to the other of the carriage, his face as scarlet as his coat—swearing at every word; ignorant on every point off parade, except the merits of a bottle and the looks of a woman; not of high birth, yet absurdly proud of his no-ancestry; brave as a bull-dog; savage, lustful, prodigal, generous; gentle in soft moods; easy of love and laughter; dull of wit; utterly unread; believing his country the first in the world, and he as good a gentleman as any in it. "Yes, he is mighty well for a provincial, upon my word. He was beat at Fort What-d'ye-call-'um last year, down by the Thingamy River. What's the name on't, Talmadge?"

"The Lord knows, sir," says Talmadge; "and I dare say the Postmaster, too, who is laughing at us both."

"Oh, Captain!"

"Was caught in a regular trap. He had only militia and Indians with him. Good-day, Mr. Washington. A pretty nag, sir. That was your first affair, last year?"

"That at Fort Necessity? Yes, sir," said the gentleman, gravely saluting, as he rode up, followed by a couple of natty negro grooms, in smart livery coats and velvet hunting-caps. "I began ill, sir, never having been in action until that unlucky day."

"You were all raw levies, my good fellow. You should have seen our militia run from the Scotch, and be cursed to them. You should have had some troops with you."

"Your Excellency knows 'tis my passionate desire to see and serve with them," said Mr. Washington.

"By George, we shall try and gratify you, sir," said the General, with one of his usual huge oaths; and on the heavy carriage rolled towards Castlewood; Mr. Washington asking leave to gallop on ahead, in order to announce his Excellency's speedy arrival to the lady there.

The progress of the Commander-in-Chief was so slow, that several humbler persons who were invited to meet his Excellency came up with his carriage, and, not liking to pass the great man on the road, formed quite a procession in the dusty wake of his chariot-wheels. First came Mr. Dinwiddie, the Lieutenant-Governor of his Majesty's province, attended by his negro-servants, and in company of Parson Broadbent, the jolly Williamsburg chaplain. These were presently joined by little Mr. Dempster, the young gentlemen's schoolmaster, in his great Ramillies wig, which he kept for occasions of state. Anon appeared Mr. Laws, the judge of the court, with Madam Laws on a pillion behind him, and their negro man carrying a box containing her ladyship's cap, and bestriding a mule. The procession looked so ludicrous, that Major Danvers and Mr. Franklin espying it, laughed outright, though not so loud as to disturb his Excellency, who was asleep by this time, and bade the whole of this queer rear-guard move on, and leave the Commander-in-Chief and his escort of dragoons to follow at their leisure. There was room for all at Castlewood when they came. There was meat, drink, and the best tobacco for his Majesty's soldiers; and laughing and jollity for the negroes; and a plenteous welcome for their masters.

The honest General required to be helped to most dishes at the table, and more than once, and was for ever holding out his glass for drink; Nathan's sangaree he pronounced to be excellent, and had drunk largely of it on arriving before dinner. There was cyder, ale, brandy, and plenty of good Bordeaux wine, some which Colonel Esmond himself had brought home with him to the colony, and which was fit for *ponteeficis cœnis*, said little Mr. Dempster, with a wink to

Mr. Broadbent, the clergyman of the adjoining parish. Mr. Broadbent returned the wink and nod, and drank the wine without caring about the Latin, as why should he, never having hitherto troubled himself about the language? Mr. Broadbent was a gambling, guzzling, cock-fighting divine, who had passed much time in the Fleet Prison, at Newmarket, at Hockley in the Hole; and having gone of all sorts of errands for his friend, Lord Cinqbars, Lord Ringwood's son, (my lady Cinqbars's waiting-woman being Mr. B.'s mother—I dare say the modern reader had best not be too particular regarding Mr. Broadbent's father's pedigree,) had been of late sent out to a church-living in Virginia. He and young Harry had fought many a match of cocks together, taken many a roe in company, hauled in countless quantities of shad and salmon, slain wild geese and wild swans, pigeons, and plovers, and destroyed myriads of canvas-backed ducks. It was said by the envious that Broadbent was the midnight poacher on whom Mr. Washington set his dogs, and whom he caned by the river-side at Mount Vernon. The fellow got away from his captor's grip, and scrambled to his boat in the dark; but Broadbent was laid up for two Sundays afterwards, and when he came abroad again, had the evident remains of a black eye, and a new collar to his coat. All the games at the cards had Harry Esmond and Parson Broadbent played together, besides hunting all the birds in the air, the beasts in the forest, and the fish of the sea. Indeed, when the boys rode together to get their reading with Mr. Dempster, I suspect that Harry stayed behind and took lessons from the other professor of European learning and accomplishments,—George going his own way, reading his own books, and, of course, telling no tales of his younger brother.

All the birds of the Virginia air, and all the fish of the sea in season were here laid on Madam Esmond's board to feed his Excellency and the rest of the English and American gentlemen. The gumbo was declared to be perfection (young Mr. Harry's black servant was named after this dish, being discovered behind the door with his head in a bowl of this delicious hotch-potch by the late Colonel, and grimly christened on the spot), the shad were rich and fresh, the stewed terrapins were worthy of London aldermen (before George, he would like the Duke himself to taste them, his Excellency deigned to say), and indeed, stewed terrapins are worthy of any duke or even emperor. The negro-women have a genius for cookery, and in Castlewood kitchens there were adepts in the art brought up under the keen eye of the late and the present Madam Esmond. Certain of the dishes, and especially the sweets and *flans*, Madam Esmond prepared herself with great neatness and dexterity; carving several of the principal pieces, as the kindly cumbrous fashion of the day was, putting up the laced lappets of her sleeves, and showing the prettiest round arms and small hands and wrists as she performed this ancient rite of a hospitality not so languid as ours. The old law of the table was that the mistress was to press her guests with a decent eagerness, to watch and see whom she could encourage to farther enjoyment, to know culinary anatomic secrets, and execute carving operations upon fowls, fish, game, joints of meat, and so forth; to cheer her guests to fresh efforts, to whisper her neighbour, Mr. Braddock: "I have kept for your Excellency the jowl of this salmon.—I *will* take no denial! Mr. Franklin, you drink only water, sir, though our cellar has wholesome wine which gives no headaches.—Mr. Justice, you love woodcock pie?"

"Because I know who makes the pastry," says Mr. Laws, the Judge, with a profound bow. "I wish, Madam, we had such a happy knack of pastry at home as you have at Castlewood. I often say to my wife, 'My dear, I wish you had Madam Esmond's hand.'"

"It is a very pretty hand: I am sure others would like it too," says Mr. Postmaster of Boston, at which remark Mr. Esmond looks but half-pleased at the little gentleman.

"Such a hand for a light pie-crust," continues the Judge, "and my service to you, Madam." And he thinks the widow cannot but be propitiated by this compliment. She says simply that she had lessons when she was at home in England for her education, and that there were certain dishes which her mother taught her to make, and which her father and sons both liked. She was very glad if they pleased her company. More such remarks follow: more dishes; ten times as much meat as is needful for the company. Mr. Washington does not embark in the general conversation much, but he and Mr. Talmadge, and Major Danvers, and the Postmaster, are deep in talk about roads, rivers, conveyances, sumpter-horses and artillery train; and the provincial militia Colonel has bits of bread laid at intervals on the table before him, and stations marked out, on which he has his finger, and regarding which he is talking to his brother aides-de-camp, till a negro-servant, changing the courses, brushes off the Potomac with a napkin, and sweeps up the Ohio in a spoon.

At the end of dinner, Mr. Broadbent leaves his place and walks up behind the Lieutenant-Governor's chair, where he says Grace, returning to his seat and resuming his knife and fork when this work of devotion is over. And now the sweets and puddings are come, of which I can give you a list, if you like; but what young lady cares for the puddings of to-day, much more for those which were eaten a hundred years ago, and which Madam Esmond had prepared for her guests with so much neatness and skill? Then, the table being cleared, Nathan, her chief-manager, lays a glass to every person, and fills his mistress's. Bowing to the company, she says she drinks but one toast, but knows how heartily all the gentlemen present will join her. Then she calls, "His Majesty," bowing to Mr. Braddock, who with his aides-de-camp and the colonial gentlemen all loyally repeat the name of their beloved and gracious Sovereign. And hereupon, having drunk her glass of wine and saluted all the company, the widow retires between a row of negro-servants, performing one of her very handsomest curtseys at the door.

The kind Mistress of Castlewood bore her part in the entertainment with admirable spirit, and looked so gay and handsome, and spoke with such cheerfulness and courage to all her company, that the few ladies who were present at the dinner, could not but congratulate Madam Esmond upon the elegance of the feast, and especially upon her manner of presiding at it. But they were scarcely got to her drawing-room, when her artificial courage failed her, and she burst into tears on the sofa by Mrs. Laws' side, just in the midst of a compliment from that lady. "Ah, Madam!" she said. "It may be an honour, as you say, to have the King's representative in my house, and our family has received greater personages than Mr. Braddock. But he comes to take one of my sons away from me. Who knows whether my boy will return, or how? I dreamed of him last night as wounded, and quite white with blood streaming from his side. I would not be so ill-mannered as to let my grief be visible before the gentlemen; but, my good Mrs. Justice, who has parted with children, and who has a mother's heart of her own, would like me none the better, if mine were very easy this evening."

The ladies administered such consolations as seemed proper or palatable to their hostess, who tried not to give way farther to her melancholy, and remembered that she had other duties to perform, before yielding to her own sad mood. "It will be time enough, Madam, to be sorry when they are gone," she said to the Justice's wife, her good neighbour. "My boy must not see me following him with a wistful face, and have our parting made more dismal by my weakness. It is good that gentlemen of his rank and station should show themselves where their country calls them. That has always been the way of the Esmonds, and the same Power which graciously preserved my dear father through twenty great battles in the Queen's time, I trust and pray, will watch over my son now his turn is come to do his duty." And, now, instead of lamenting her fate, or farther alluding to it, I dare say the resolute lady sat down with her female friends to a pool of cards and a dish of coffee, whilst the gentlemen remained in the neighbouring parlour, still calling their toasts and drinking their wine. When one lady objected that these latter were sitting rather long, Madam Esmond said: "It would improve and amuse the boys to be with the English gentlemen. Such society was very rarely to be had in their distant province, and though their conversation sometimes was free, she was sure that gentlemen and men of fashion would have regard to the youth of her sons, and say nothing before them which young people should not hear."

It was evident that the English gentlemen relished the good cheer provided for them. Whilst the ladies were yet at their cards, Nathan came in and whispered Mrs. Mountain, who at first cried out—"No; she would give no more—the common Bordeaux they might have, and welcome, if they still wanted more—but she would not give any more of the Colonel's." It appeared that the dozen bottles of particular claret had been already drunk up by the gentlemen, "besides ale, cyder, Burgundy, Lisbon, and Madeira," says Mrs. Mountain, enumerating the supplies.

But Madam Esmond was for having no stint in the hospitality of the night. Mrs. Mountain was fain to bustle away with her keys to the sacred vault where the Colonel's particular Bordeaux lay, surviving its master, who, too, had long passed underground. As they went on their journey, Mrs. Mountain asked whether any of the gentlemen had had too much? Nathan thought Mister Broadbent was tipsy—he always tipsy; he then thought the General gentleman was tipsy; and he thought Master George was a lilly drunk.

"Master George!" cries Mrs. Mountain: "why, he will sit for days without touching a drop."

Nevertheless, Nathan persisted in his notion that Master George was a lilly drunk. He was always filling his glass, he had talked, he had sung, he had cut jokes, especially against Mr. Washington, which made Mr. Washington quite red and angry, Nathan said. "Well, well!" Mrs. Mountain cried eagerly; "it was right a gentleman should make himself merry in good company, and pass the bottle along with his friends." And she trotted to the particular Bordeaux cellar with only the more alacrity.

The tone of freedom and almost impertinence which young George Esmond had adopted of late days towards Mr. Washington had very deeply vexed and annoyed that gentleman. There was scarce half-a-dozen years' difference of age between him and the Castlewood twins; but Mr. Washington had always been remarked for a discretion and sobriety much beyond his time of life, whilst the boys of Castlewood seemed younger than theirs. They had always been till now under their mother's anxious tutelage, and had looked up to their neighbour of Mount Vernon as their guide, director, friend—as, indeed, almost everybody seemed to do who came in contact with the simple and upright young man. Himself of the most scrupulous gravity and good-breeding, in his communication with other folks he appeared to exact, or, at any rate, to occasion, the same behaviour. His nature was above levity and jokes: they seemed out of place when addressed to him. He was slow of comprehending them: and they slunk as it were abashed out of his society. "He always seemed great to me," says Harry Warrington, in one of his letters many years after the date of which we are writing; "and I never thought of him otherwise than as a hero. When he came over to Castlewood and taught us boys surveying, to see him riding to hounds, was as if he was charging an army. If he fired a shot, I thought the bird must come down, and if he flung a net, the largest fish in the river were sure to be in it. His words were always few, but they were always wise; they were not idle, as our words are, they were grave, sober, and strong, and ready on occasion to do their duty. In spite of his antipathy to him, my brother respected and admired the General as much as I did—that is to say, more than any mortal man."

Mr. Washington was the first to leave the jovial party which were doing so much honour to Madam Esmond's hospitality. Young George Esmond, who had taken his mother's place when she left it, had been free with the glass and with the tongue. He had said a score of things to his guest which wounded and chafed the latter, and to which Mr. Washington could give no reply. Angry beyond all endurance, he left the table at length, and walked away through the open windows into the broad verandah or porch which belonged to Castlewood as to all Virginian houses.

Here Madam Esmond caught sight of her friend's tall frame as it strode up and down before the windows; and, the evening being warm, or her game over, she gave up her cards to one of the other ladies, and joined her good neighbour out of doors. He tried to compose his countenance as well as he could: it was impossible that he should explain to his hostess why and with whom he was angry.

"The gentlemen are long over their wine," she said; "gentlemen of the army are always fond of it."

"If drinking makes good soldiers, some yonder are distinguishing themselves greatly, Madam," said Mr. Washington.

"And I dare say the General is at the head of his troops?"

"No doubt, no doubt," answered the Colonel, who always received this lady's remarks, playful or serious, with a peculiar softness and kindness. "But the General is the General, and it is not for me to make remarks on his Excellency's doings at table or elsewhere. I think very likely that military gentlemen born and bred at home are different from us of the colonies. We have such a hot sun, that we need not wine to fire our blood as they do. And drinking toasts seems a point of honour with them. Talmadge hiccupped to me—I should say, whispered to me—just now, that an officer could no more refuse a toast than a challenge, and he said that it was after the greatest difficulty and dislike at first that he learned to drink. He has certainly overcome his difficulty with uncommon resolution."

"What, I wonder, can you talk of for so many hours?" asked the lady.

"I don't think I can tell you all we talk of, Madam, and I must not tell tales out of school. We talked about the war, and of the force Mr. Contrecœur has, and how we are to get at him. The General is for making the campaign in his coach, and makes light of it and the enemy. That we shall beat them, if we meet them, I trust there is no doubt."

"How can there be?" says the lady, whose father had served under Marlborough.

"Mr. Franklin, though he is only from New England," continued the gentleman, "spoke great good sense, and would have spoken more if the English gentlemen would let him; but they reply invariably that we are only raw provincials, and don't know what disciplined British troops can do. Had they not best hasten forwards and make turnpike roads and have comfortable inns ready for his Excellency at the end of the day's march?—'There's some sort of inns, I suppose,' says Mr. Danvers, 'not so comfortable as we have in England, we can't expect that.'—'No, you can't expect that,' says Mr. Franklin, who seems a very shrewd and facetious person. He drinks his water, and seems to laugh at the Englishmen, though I doubt whether it is fair for a water-drinker to sit by and spy out the weaknesses of gentlemen over their wine."

"And my boys? I hope they are prudent?" said the widow, laying her hand on her guest's arm. "Harry promised me, and when he gives his word, I can trust him for anything. George is always moderate. Why do you look so grave?"

"Indeed, to be frank with you, I do not know what has come over George in these last days," says Mr. Washington. "He has some grievance against me which I do not understand, and of which I don't care to ask the reason. He spoke to me before the gentlemen in a way which scarcely became him. We are going the campaign together, and 'tis a pity we begin such ill friends."

"He has been ill. He is always wild and wayward, and hard to understand. But he has the most affectionate heart in the world. You will bear with him, you will protect him—promise me you will."

"Dear lady, I will do so with my life," Mr. Washington said with great fervour. "You know I would lay it down cheerfully for you or any you love."

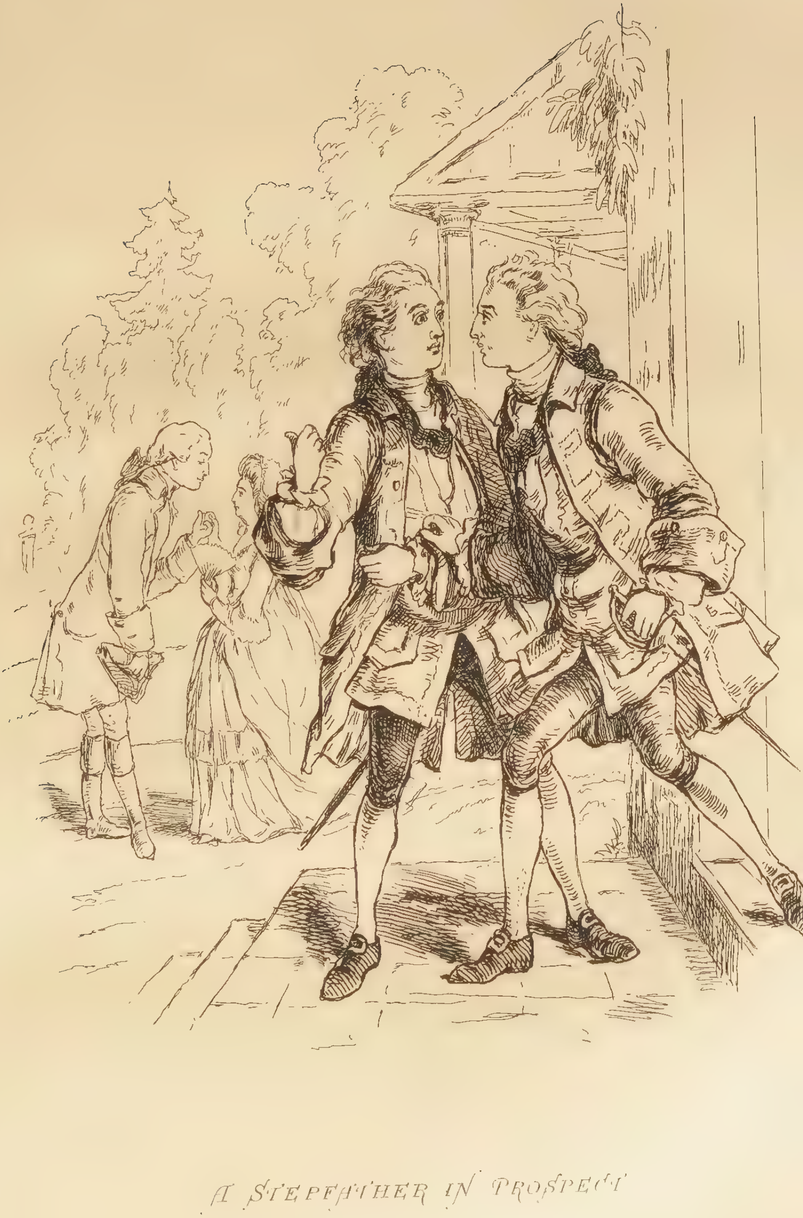
"And my father's blessing and mine go with you, dear friend!" cried the widow, full of thanks and affection.

As they pursued their conversation, they had quitted the porch under which they had first begun to talk, and where they could hear the laughter and toasts of the gentlemen over their wine, and were pacing a walk on the rough lawn before the house. Young George Warrington, from his place at the head of the table in the dining-room, could see the pair as they passed to and fro, and had listened for some time past, and replied in a very distracted manner to the remarks of the gentlemen round about him, who were too much engaged with their own talk and jokes, and drinking, to pay much attention to their young host's behaviour. Mr. Braddock loved a song after dinner, and Mr. Danvers his aide-de-camp, who had a fine tenor voice, was delighting his General with the latest ditty from Marybone Gardens, when George Warrington, jumping up, ran towards the window, and then returned and pulled his brother Harry by the sleeve, who sat with his back towards the window.

"What is it?" says Harry, who, for his part, was charmed too with the song and chorus.

"Come," cried George, with a stamp of his foot, and the younger followed obediently.

"What is it?" continued George, with a bitter oath. "Don't you see what it is? They were billing and cooing this morning; they are billing and cooing now before going to roost. Had we not better both go into the garden, and pay our duty to our mamma and papa?" and he pointed to Mr. Washington, who was taking the widow's hand very tenderly in his.



A STEPFATHER IN PROSPECT

CHAPTER X.

A HOT AFTERNOON.

GENERAL BRADDOCK and the other guests of Castlewood being duly consigned to their respective quarters, the boys retired to their own room, and there poured out to one another their opinions respecting the great event of the day. They would not bear such a marriage—no. Was the representative of the Marquises of Esmond to marry the younger son of a colonial family, who had been bred up as a land-surveyor? Castlewood, and the boys at nineteen years of age, handed over to the tender mercies of a step-father of three-and-twenty! Oh, it was monstrous! Harry was for going straightway to his mother in her bed-room—where her black maidens were divesting her ladyship of the simple jewels and fineries which she had assumed in compliment to the feast—protesting against the odious match, and announcing that they would go home, live upon their little property there, and leave her for ever, if the unnatural union took place.

George advocated another way of stopping it, and explained his plan to his admiring brother. "Our mother," he said, "can't marry a man with whom one or both of us has been out on the field, and who has wounded us or killed us, or whom we have wounded or killed. We must have him out, Harry."

Harry saw the profound truth conveyed in George's statement, and admired his brother's immense sagacity. "No, George," says he, "you are right. Mother can't marry our murderer; she won't be as bad as that. And if we pink him, he is done for. '*Cadit quæstio*,' as Mr. Dempster used to say. Shall I send my boy with a challenge to Colonel George now?"

"My dear Harry," the elder replied, thinking with some complacency of his affair of honour at Quebec, "you are not accustomed to affairs of this sort."

"No," owned Harry, with a sigh, looking with envy and admiration on his senior.

"We can't insult a gentleman in our own house," continued George, with great majesty; "the laws of honour forbid such inhospitable treatment. But, sir, we can ride out with him, and, as soon as the park gates are closed, we can tell him our mind."

"That we can, by George!" cries Harry, grasping his brother's hand, "and that we will, too. I say, Georgy . . ." Here the lad's face became very red, and his brother asked him what he would say?

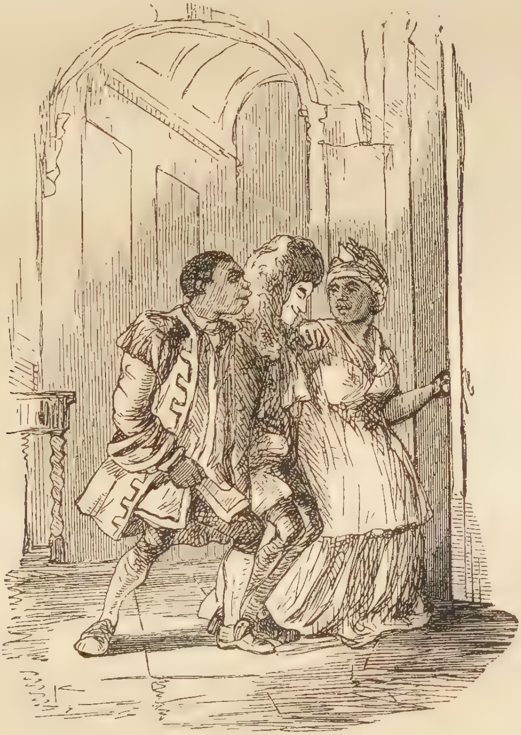
"This is *my* turn, brother," Harry pleaded. "If you go the campaign, I ought to have the other affair. Indeed, indeed, I ought." And he prayed for this bit of promotion.

"Again the head of the house must take the lead, my dear," George said, with a superb air. "If I fall, my Harry will avenge me. But I must fight George Washington, Hal: and 'tis best I should; for, indeed, I hate him the worst. Was it not he who counselled my mother to order that wretch, Ward, to lay hands on me?"

"Ah, George," interposed the more pacable younger brother, "you ought to forget and forgive!"

"Forgive? Never, sir, as long as I remember. You can't order remembrance out of a man's mind; and a wrong that was a wrong yesterday must be a wrong to-morrow. I never, of my knowledge, did one to any man, and I never will suffer one, if I can help it. I think very ill of Mr. Ward, but I don't think so badly of him as to suppose he will ever forgive thee that blow with the ruler. Colonel Washington is our enemy, mine especially. He has advised one wrong against me, and he meditates a greater. I tell you, brother, we must punish him."

The grandsire's old Bordeaux had set George's ordinarily pale countenance into a flame. Harry, his brother's fondest worshipper, could not but admire George's haughty bearing and rapid declamation, and prepared himself, with his usual docility, to follow his chief. So the boys went to their beds, the elder conveying special injunctions to his junior to be civil to all the guests so long as they remained under the maternal roof on the morrow.



Good manners and a repugnance to telling tales out of school, forbid us from saying which of Madam Esmond's guests was the first to fall under the weight of her hospitality. The respectable descendants of

Messrs. Talmadge and Danvers, aides-de-camp to his Excellency, might not care to hear how their ancestors were intoxicated a hundred years ago; and yet the gentlemen themselves took no shame in the fact, and there is little doubt they or their comrades were tipsy twice or thrice in the week. Let us fancy them reeling to bed, supported by sympathizing negroes; and their vinous General, too stout a toper to have surrendered himself to a half-dozen bottles of Bordeaux, conducted to his chamber by the young gentlemen of the house, and speedily sleeping the sleep which friendly Bacchus gives. The good lady of Castlewood saw the condition of her guests without the least surprise or horror; and was up early in the morning, providing cooling drinks for their hot palates, which the servants carried to their respective chambers. At breakfast, one of the English officers rallied Mr. Franklin, who took no wine at all, and therefore refused the morning cool draught of toddy, by showing how the Philadelphia gentleman lost two pleasures, the drink and the toddy. The young fellow said the disease was pleasant and the remedy delicious, and laughingly proposed to continue repeating them both. The General's new American aide-de-camp, Colonel Washington, was quite sober and serene. The British officers vowed they must take him in hand and teach him what the ways of the English army were; but the Virginian gentleman gravely said he did not care to learn that part of the English military education.

The widow, occupied as she had been with the cares of a great dinner, followed by a great breakfast on the morning ensuing, had scarce leisure to remark the behaviour of her sons very closely, but at least saw that George was scrupulously polite to her favourite, Colonel Washington, as to all the other guests of the house.

Before Mr. Braddock took his leave, he had a private audience of Madam Esmond, in which his Excellency formally offered to take her son into his family; and when the arrangements for George's departure were settled between his mother and future chief, Madam Esmond, though she might feel them, did not show any squeamish terrors about the dangers of the bottle, which she saw were amongst the severest and most certain which her son would have to face. She knew her boy must take his part in the world, and encounter his portion of evil and good. "Mr. Braddock is a perfect fine gentleman in the morning," she said stoutly to her aide-de-camp, Mrs. Mountain; "and though my papa did not drink, 'tis certain that many of the best company in England do." The jolly General good-naturedly shook hands with George, who presented himself to his Excellency after the maternal interview was over, and bade George welcome, and to be in attendance at Frederick three days hence; shortly after which time the expedition would set forth.

And now the great coach was again called into requisition, the General's escort pranced round it, the other guests and their servants went to horse. The lady of Castlewood attended his Excellency to the steps of the verandah in front of her house, the young gentlemen followed, and stood on each side of his coach-door. The guard trumpeter blew a shrill blast, the negroes shouted, "Huzzay, and God sabe de King," as Mr. Braddock most graciously took leave of his hospitable entertainers, and rolled away on his road to head-quarters.

As the boys went up the steps, there was the Colonel once more taking leave of their mother. No doubt she had been once more recommending George to his namesake's care; for Colonel Washington said: "With my life. You may depend on me," as the lads returned to their mother and the few guests still remaining in the porch. The Colonel was booted and ready to depart. "Farewell, my dear Harry," he said. "With you, George, 'tis no adieu. We shall meet in three days at the camp."

Both the young men were going to danger, perhaps to death. Colonel Washington was taking leave of her, and she was to see him no more before the campaign. No wonder the widow was very much moved.

George Warrington watched his mother's emotion, and interpreted it with a pang of malignant scorn. "Stay yet a moment, and console our mamma," he said with a steady countenance, "only the time to get ourselves booted, and my brother and I will ride with you a little way, George." George Warrington had already ordered his horses. The three young men were speedily under way, their negro grooms behind them, and Mrs. Mountain, who knew she had made mischief between them and trembled for the result, felt a vast relief that Mr. Washington was gone without a quarrel with the brothers, without, at any rate, an open declaration of love to their mother.

No man could be more courteous in demeanour than George Warrington to his neighbour and namesake, the Colonel. The latter was pleased and surprised at his young friend's altered behaviour.

The community of danger, the necessity of future fellowship, the softening influence of the long friendship which bound him to the Esmond family, the tender adieux which had just passed between him and the mistress of Castlewood, inclined the Colonel to forget the unpleasantness of the past days, and made him more than usually friendly with his young companion. George was quite gay and easy: it was Harry who was melancholy now: he rode silently and wistfully by his brother, keeping away from Colonel Washington, to whose side he used always to press eagerly before. If the honest Colonel remarked his young friend's conduct, no doubt he attributed it to Harry's known affection for his brother, and his natural anxiety to be with George now the day of their parting was so near.

They talked further about the war, and the probable end of the campaign: none of the three doubted its successful termination. Two thousand veteran British troops with their commander must get the better of any force the French could bring against them, if only they moved in decent time. The ardent young Virginian soldier had an immense respect for the experienced valour and tactics of the regular troops. King George II. had no more loyal subject than Mr. Braddock's new aide-de-camp.

So the party rode amicably together, until they reached a certain rude log-house, called Benson's, of which the proprietor, according to the custom of the day and country, did not disdain to accept money from his guests in return for hospitalities provided. There was a recruiting station here, and some officers and men of Halkett's regiment assembled, and here Colonel Washington supposed that his young friends would take leave of him.

Whilst their horses were baited, they entered the public room, and found a rough meal prepared for such as were disposed to partake. George Warrington entered the place with a particularly gay and lively air, whereas poor Harry's face was quite white and wobegone.

"One would think, Squire Harry, 'twas you who was going to leave home and fight the French and Indians, and not Mr. George," says Benson.

"I may be alarmed about danger to my brother," said Harry, "though I might bear my own share pretty well. 'Tis not my fault that I stay at home."

"No, indeed, brother," cries George.

"Harry Warrington's courage does not need any proof!" cries Mr. Washington.

"You do the family honour by speaking so well of us, Colonel," says Mr. George, with a low bow. "I dare say we can hold our own, if need be."

Whilst his friend was vaunting his courage, Harry looked, to say the truth, by no means courageous. As his eyes met his brother's, he read in George's look an announcement which alarmed the fond faithful lad. "You are not going to do it now?" he whispered his brother.

"Yes, now," says Mr. George, very steadily.

"For God's sake let me have the turn. You are going on the campaign, you ought not to have everything—and there may be an explanation, George. We may be all wrong."

"Psha, how can we? It must be done now—don't be alarmed. No names shall be mentioned—I shall easily find a subject."

A couple of Halkett's officers, whom our young gentlemen knew, were sitting under the porch, with the Virginian toddy-bowl before them.

"What are you conspiring, gentlemen?" cried one of them. "Is it a drink?"

By the tone of their voices and their flushed cheeks, it was clear the gentlemen had already been engaged in drinking that morning.

"The very thing, sir," George said gaily. "Fresh glasses, Mr. Benson! What, no glasses? Then we must have at the bowl."

"Many a good man has drunk from it," says Mr. Benson; and the lads, one after another, and bowing first to their military acquaintance, touched the bowl with their lips. The liquor did not seem to be much diminished for the boys' drinking, though George especially gave himself a toper's airs, and protested it was delicious after their ride. He called out to Colonel Washington, who was at the porch, to join his friends, and drink.

The lad's tone was offensive, and resembled the manner lately adopted by him, and which had so much chafed Mr. Washington. He bowed, and said he was not thirsty.

"Nay, the liquor is paid for," says George; "never fear, Colonel."

"I said I was not thirsty. I did not say the liquor was not paid for," said the young Colonel, drumming with his foot.

"When the King's health is proposed, an officer can hardly say no. I drink the health of his Majesty, gentlemen," cried George. "Colonel Washington can drink it or leave it. The King!"

This was a point of military honour. The two British officers of Halkett's, Captain Grace and Mr. Waring, both drank "The King." Harry Warrington drank "The King." Colonel Washington, with glaring eyes, gulped, too, a slight draft from the bowl.

Then Captain Grace proposed "The Duke and the Army," which toast there was likewise no gainsaying. Colonel Washington had to swallow "The Duke and the Army."

"You don't seem to stomach the toast, Colonel," said George.

"I tell you again, I don't want to drink," replied the Colonel. "It seems to me the Duke and the Army would be served all the better if their healths were not drunk so often."

"You are not up to the ways of regular troops as yet," said Captain Grace, with rather a thick voice.

"May be not, sir."

"A British officer," continues Captain Grace, with great energy but doubtful articulation, "never neglects a toast of that sort, nor any other duty. A man who refuses to drink the health of the Duke—hang me, such a man should be tried by a court-martial!"

"What means this language to me? You are drunk, sir!" roared Colonel Washington, jumping up, and striking the table with his fist.

"A cursed provincial officer say I'm drunk!" shrieks out Captain Grace. "Waring, do you hear that?"

"*I* heard it, sir!" cried George Warrington. "We all heard it. He entered at my invitation—the liquor called for was mine: the table was mine—and I am shocked to hear such monstrous language used at it as Colonel Washington has just employed towards my esteemed guest, Captain Waring."

"Confound your impudence, you infernal young jackanapes!" bellowed out Colonel Washington. "*You* dare to insult me before British officers, and find fault with my language? For months past, I have borne with such impudence from you, that if I had not loved your mother—yes, sir, and your good grandfather and your brother—I would—I would——" Here his words failed him, and the irate

Colonel, with glaring eyes and purple face, and every limb quivering with wrath, stood for a moment speechless before his young enemy.

"You would what, sir?" says George, very quietly, "if you did not love my grandfather, and my brother, and my mother? You are making her petticoat a plea for some conduct of yours—you would do what, sir, may I ask again?"

"I would put you across my knee and whip you, you snarling little puppy, that's what I would do!" cried the Colonel, who had found breath by this time, and vented another explosion of fury.

"Because you have known us all our lives, and made our house your own, that is no reason you should insult either of us!" here cried Harry, starting up. "What you have said, George Washington, is an insult to me and my brother alike. You will ask our pardon, sir!"

"Pardon!"

"Or give us the reparation that is due to gentlemen," continues Harry.

The stout Colonel's heart smote him to think that he should be at mortal quarrel or called upon to shed the blood of one of the lads he loved. As Harry stood facing him, with his fair hair, flushing cheeks, and quivering voice, an immense tenderness and kindness filled the bosom of the elder man. "I—I am bewildered," he said. "My words, perhaps, were very hasty. What has been the meaning of George's behaviour to me for months back? Only tell me, and, perhaps——"

The evil spirit was awake and victorious in young George Warrington: his black eyes shot out scorn and hatred at the simple and guileless gentleman before him. "You are shirking from the question, sir, as you did from the toast just now," he said. "I am not a boy to suffer under your arrogance. You have publicly insulted me in a public place, and I demand a reparation."

"In heaven's name, be it!" says Mr. Washington, with the deepest grief in his face.

"And you have insulted *me*," continues Captain Grace, reeling towards him. "What was it he said? Confound the militia captain—colonel, what is he? You've insulted me! Oh, Waring! to think I should be insulted by a captain of militia!" And tears bedewed the noble Captain's cheek as this harrowing thought crossed his mind.

"I insult *you*, you hog!" the Colonel again yelled out, for he was little affected by humour, and had no disposition to laugh as the others had at the scene. And, behold, at this minute a fourth adversary was upon him.

"Great Powers, sir!" said Captain Waring, "are three affairs not enough for you, and must I come into the quarrel, too? You have a quarrel with these two young gentlemen."

"Hasty words, sir!" cries poor Harry once more.

"Hasty words, sir!" cries Captain Waring. "A gentleman tells another gentleman that he will put him across his knees and whip him, and you call those hasty words? Let me tell you if any man were to say to me, 'Charles Waring,' or 'Captain Waring, I'll put you across my knees and whip you,' I'd say, 'I'll drive my cheese-toaster through his body,' if he were as big as Goliath, I would. That's one affair with young Mr. George Warrington. Mr. Harry, of course, as a young man of spirit, will stand by his brother. That's two. Between Grace and the Colonel apology is impossible. And, now—run me through the body!—you call an officer of my regiment—of Halkett's, sir!—a hog before my face! Great Heavens, sir! Mr. Washington! are you all like this in Virginia? Excuse me, I would use no offensive personality, as, by George! I will suffer none from any man! but, by Gad, Colonel! give me leave to tell you that you are the most quarrelsome man I ever saw in my life. Call a disabled officer of my regiment—for he is disabled, ain't you, Grace?—call him a hog before *me!* You withdraw it, sir—you withdraw it?"

"Is this some infernal conspiracy in which you are all leagued against me?" shouted the Colonel. "It would seem as if I was drunk, and not you, as you all are. I withdraw nothing. I apologize for nothing. By heavens! I will meet one or half-a-dozen of you in your turn, young or old, drunk or sober."

"I do not wish to hear myself called more names," cried Mr. George Warrington. "This affair can proceed, sir, without any further insult on your part. When will it please you to give me the meeting?"

"The sooner the better, sir!" said the Colonel, fuming with rage.

"The sooner the better," hiccupped Captain Grace, with many oaths needless to print—(in those days, oaths were the customary garnish of all gentlemen's conversation)—and he rose staggering from his seat, and reeled towards his sword, which he had laid by the door, and fell as he reached the weapon. "The sooner the better!" the poor tipsy wretch again cried out from the ground, waving his weapon and knocking his own hat over his eyes.

"At any rate, *this* gentleman's business will keep cool till to-morrow," the Militia Colonel said, turning to the other King's officer. "You will hardly bring your man out to-day, Captain Waring?"

"I confess that neither his hand nor mine are particularly steady."

"Mine is!" cried Mr. Warrington, glaring at his enemy.

His comrade of former days was as hot and as savage. "Be it so—with what weapon, sir?" Washington said sternly.

"Not with small swords, Colonel. We can beat you with them. You know that from our old bouts. Pistols had better be the word."

"As you please, George Warrington—and God forgive you, George! God pardon you, Harry! for bringing me into this quarrel," said the Colonel, with a face full of sadness and gloom.

Harry hung his head, but George continued with perfect calmness: "I, sir? It was not I who called names, who talked of a cane, who insulted a gentleman in a public place before gentlemen of the army? It is not the first time you have chosen to take me for a negro, and talked of the whip for me."

The Colonel started back, turning very red, and as if struck by a sudden remembrance.

"Great heavens, George! is it that boyish quarrel you are still recalling?"

"Who made you the overseer of Castlewood?" said the boy, grinding his teeth. "I am not your slave, George Washington, and I never will be. I hated you then, and I hate you now. And you have insulted me, and I am a gentleman, and so are you. Is that not enough?"

"Too much, only too much," said the Colonel, with a genuine grief on his face, and at his heart. "Do you bear malice too, Harry? I had not thought this of thee!"

"I stand by my brother," said Harry, turning away from the Colonel's look, and grasping George's hand. The sadness on their adversary's face did not depart. "Heaven be good to us! 'Tis all clear now," he muttered to himself. "The time to write a few letters, and I am at your service, Mr. Warrington," he said.

"You have your own pistols at your saddle. I did not ride out with any; but will send Sady back for mine. That will give you time enough, Colonel Washington?"

"Plenty of time, sir." And each gentleman made the other a low bow, and, putting his arm in his brother's, George walked away. The Virginian officer looked towards the two unlucky captains, who were by this time helpless with liquor. Captain Benson, the master of the tavern, was propping the hat of one of them over his head.

"It is not altogether their fault, Colonel," said my landlord, with a grim look of humour. "Jack Firebrace and Tom Humbold of Spotsylvania was here this morning, chanting horses with 'em. And Jack and Tom got 'em to play cards; and they didn't win—the British Captains didn't. And Jack and Tom challenged them to drink for the honour of Old England, and they didn't win at that game neither, much. They are kind, free-handed fellows when they are sober, but they are a pretty pair of fools—they are."

"Captain Benson, you are an old frontier man, and an officer of ours, before you turned farmer and taverner. You will help me in this matter with yonder young gentlemen?" said the Colonel.

"I'll stand by and see fair play, Colonel. I won't have no hand in it, beyond seeing fair play. Madam Esmond has helped me many a time, tended my poor wife in her lying-in, and doctored our Betty in the fever. You ain't a goin' to be very hard with them poor boys? Though I seen 'em both shoot: the fair one hunts well, as you know, but the old one's a wonder at an ace of spades."

"Will you be pleased to send my man with my valise, Captain, into any private room which you can spare me? I must write a few letters before this business comes on. God grant it were well over!" And the Captain led the Colonel into almost the only other room of his house, calling, with many oaths, to a pack of negro servants to disperse thence, who were chattering loudly among one another, and no doubt discussing the quarrel which had just taken place. Edwin, the Colonel's man, returned with his master's portmanteau, and, as he looked from the window, he saw Sady, George Warrington's negro, galloping away upon his errand, doubtless, and in the direction of Castlewood. The Colonel, young and naturally hot-headed, but the most courteous and scrupulous of men, and ever keeping his strong passions under guard, could not but think with amazement of the position in which he found himself, and of the three, perhaps four enemies, who appeared suddenly before him, menacing his life. How had this strange series of quarrels been brought about? He had ridden away a few hours since from Castlewood, with his young companions, and to all seeming they were perfect friends. A shower of rain sends them into a tavern, where there are a couple of recruiting officers, and they are not seated for half an hour, at a social table, but he has quarrelled with the whole company, called this one names, agreed to meet another in combat, and threatened chastisement to a third, the son of his most intimate friend!

CHAPTER XI.

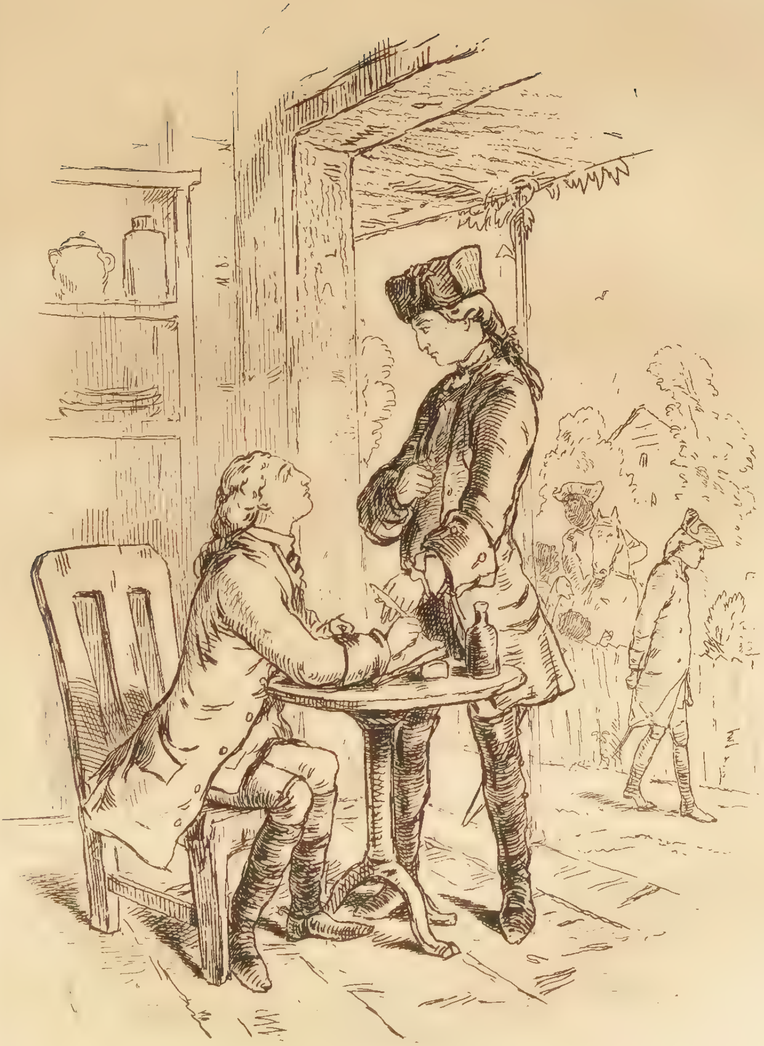
WHEREIN THE TWO GEORGES PREPARE FOR BLOOD.

THE Virginian Colonel remained in one chamber of the tavern, occupied with gloomy preparations for the ensuing meeting: his adversary in the other room thought fit to make his testamentary dispositions, too, and dictated, by his obedient brother and secretary, a grandiloquent letter to his mother, of whom, and by that writing, he took a solemn farewell. She would hardly, he supposed, pursue *the scheme which she had in view* (a peculiar satirical emphasis was laid upon the scheme which she had in view), after the event of that morning, should he fall, as, probably, would be the case.

"My dear, dear George, don't say that!" cried the affrighted secretary.

"As probably will be the case," George persisted with great majesty. "You know what a good shot Colonel George is, Harry. I, myself, am pretty fair at a mark, and 'tis probable that one or both of us will drop.—'I scarcely suppose you will carry out the intentions you have at present in view.'" This was uttered in a tone of still greater bitterness than George had used even in the previous phrase. Harry wept as he took it down.

"You see I say nothing; Madam Esmond's name does not even appear in the quarrel. Do you not remember, in our grandfather's life of himself, how he says that Lord Castlewood fought Lord



GEORGE'S SECRETARY AT WAR

Mohun on a pretext of a quarrel at cards? and never so much as hinted at the lady's name, who was the real cause of the duel? I took my hint, I confess, from *that*, Harry. Our mother is not compromised in the ——. Why, child, what have you been writing, and who taught thee to spell?" Harry had written the last words "in view," in *vew*, and a great blot of salt water from his honest, boyish eyes may have obliterated some other bad spelling.

"I can't think about the spelling now, Georgy," whimpered George's clerk. "I'm too miserable for that. I begin to think, perhaps, it's all nonsense, perhaps Colonel George never——"

"Never meant to take possession of Castlewood; never gave himself airs, and patronized us there; never advised my mother to have me flogged, never intended to marry her; never insulted me, and was insulted before the King's officers; never wrote to his brother to say we should be the better for his parental authority? The paper is there," cried the young man, slapping his breast-pocket, "and if anything happens to me, Harry Warrington, you will find it on my corse!"

"Write yourself, Georgy, I *can't* write," says Harry, digging his fists into his eyes, and smearing over the whole composition, bad spelling and all, with his elbows.

On this, George taking another sheet of paper, sat down at his brother's place, and produced a composition in which he introduced the longest words, the grandest Latin quotations, and the most profound satire of which the youthful scribe was master. He desired that his negro boy, Sady, should be set free; that his "Horace," a choice of his books, and, if possible, a suitable provision should be made for his affectionate tutor, Mr. Dempster; that his silver fruit-knife, his music-books, and harpsichord, should be given to little Fanny Mountain; and that his brother should take a lock of his hair, and wear it in memory of his ever fond and faithfully attached George. And he sealed the document with the seal of arms that his grandfather had worn.

"The watch, of course, will be yours," said George, taking out his grandfather's gold watch, and looking at it. "Why two hours and a half are gone! 'Tis time that Sady should be back with the pistols. Take the watch, Harry dear."

"It's no good!" cried out Harry, flinging his arms round his brother. "If he fights you, I'll fight him, too. If he kills my

Georgy, —— him, he shall have a shot at me!" and the poor lad uttered more than one of those expressions, which are said peculiarly to affect recording angels, who have to take them down at celestial chanceries.

Meanwhile, General Braddock's new aide-de-camp had written five letters in his large resolute hand, and sealed them with his seal. One was to his mother, at Mount Vernon; one to his brother; one was addressed M. C. only; and one to his Excellency, Major-General Braddock. "And one, young gentlemen, is for your mother, Madam Esmond," said the boys' informant.

Again the recording angel had to fly off with a violent expression, which parted from the lips of George Warrington. The chancery previously mentioned was crowded with such cases, and the messengers must have been for ever on the wing. But I fear for young George and his oath there was no excuse; for it was an execration uttered from a heart full of hatred, and rage, and jealousy.

It was the landlord of the tavern who communicated these facts to the young men. The Captain had put on his old militia uniform to do honour to the occasion, and informed the boys that the "Colonel was walking up and down the garden a waiting for 'em, and that the Reg'lars was a'most sober, too, by this time."

A plot of ground near the Captain's log-house had been enclosed with shingles, and cleared for a kitchen-garden; there indeed paced Colonel Washington, his hands behind his back, his head bowed down, a grave sorrow on his handsome face. The negro servants were crowded at the palings, and looking over. The officers under the porch had wakened up also, as their host remarked. Captain Waring was walking, almost steadily, under the balcony formed by the sloping porch and roof of the wooden house; and Captain Grace was lolling over the railing, with eyes which stared very much, though perhaps they did not see very clearly. Benson's was a famous rendezvous for cock-fights, horse-matches, boxing, and wrestling-matches, such as brought the Virginian country-folks together. There had been many brawls at Benson's, and men who came thither sound and sober had gone thence with ribs broken and eyes gouged out. And squires, and farmers, and negroes, all participated in the sport.

There, then, stalked the tall young Colonel, plunged in dismal meditation. There was no way out of his scrape, but the usual cruel one, which the laws of honour and the practice of the country ordered. Goaded into fury by the impertinence of a boy, he had used insulting words. The young man had asked for reparation. He was shocked to think that George Warrington's jealousy and revenge should have rankled in the young fellow so long: but the wrong had been the Colonel's, and he was bound to pay the forfeit.

A great hallooing and shouting, such as negroes use, who love noise at all times, and especially delight to yell and scream when galloping on horseback, was now heard at a distance, and all the heads, woolly and powdered, were turned in the direction of this outcry. It came from the road over which our travellers had themselves passed three hours before, and presently the clattering of a horse's hoofs was heard, and now Mr. Sady made his appearance on his foaming horse, and actually fired a pistol off in the midst of a prodigious uproar from his woolly brethren; then he fired another pistol off: to which noises Sady's horse, which had carried Harry Warrington on many a hunt, was perfectly accustomed. And now he was in the court-yard, surrounded by a score of his bawling comrades, and was descending amidst fluttering fowls and turkeys, kicking horses and shrieking frantic pigs; and brother negroes crowded round him, to whom he instantly began to talk and chatter.

"Sady, sir, come here!" roars out Master Harry.

"Sady, come here, confound you!" shouts Master George. (Again the recording angel is in requisition, and has to be off on one of his endless errands to the register office.) "Come directly, Mas'r," says Sady, and resumes his conversation with his woolly brethren. He grins. He takes the pistols out of the holster. He snaps the locks. He points them at a grunter, which plunges through the farm-yard. He points down the road, over which he has just galloped, and towards which the woolly heads again turn. He says again, "Comin', Mas'r. Everybody a-comin'." And now, the gallop of other horses is heard. And who is yonder? Little Mr. Dempster, spurring and digging into his pony; and that lady in a riding-habit on Madam Esmond's little horse—can it be Madam Esmond? No. It is too stout. As I live it is Mrs. Mountain on Madam's grey!

"O Lor'! O Golly! Hoop! Here dey come! Hurray!" A chorus of negroes rises up. "Here dey are!" Dr. Dempster and Mrs. Mountain have clattered into the yard, have jumped from their horses, have elbowed through the negroes, have rushed into the house, have run through it and across the porch, where the British officers are sitting in muzzy astonishment; have run down the stairs to the garden where George and Harry are walking, their tall enemy stalking opposite to them; and almost ere George Warrington has had time sternly to say, "What do you do here, Madam?" Mrs. Mountain has flung her arms round his neck and cries: "Oh, George, my darling! It's a mistake! It's a mistake, and is all my fault!"

"What's a mistake?" asks George, majestically separating himself from the embrace.

"What is it, Mounty?" cries Harry, all of a tremble.

"That paper I took out of his portfolio, that paper I picked up, children; where the Colonel says he is going to marry a widow with two children. Who should it be but you, children, and who should it be but your mother?"

"Well?"

"Well, it's—it's not your mother. It's that little widow Curtis whom the Colonel is going to marry. He'd always take a rich one; I knew he would. It's not Mrs. Rachel Warrington. He told Madam so to-day, just before he was going away, and that the marriage was to come off after the campaign. And—and your mother is furious, boys. And when Sady came for the pistols, and told the whole house how you were going to fight, I told him to fire the pistols off; and I galloped after him, and I've nearly broken my poor old bones in coming to you."

"I have a mind to break Mr. Sady's," growled George. "I specially enjoined the villain not to say a word."

"Thank God he did, brother," said poor Harry. "Thank God he did!"

"What will Mr. Washington and those gentlemen think of my servant telling my mother at home that I was going to fight a duel?" asks Mr. George, still in wrath.

"You have shown your proofs before, George," says Harry, respectfully. "And, thank heaven, you are not going to fight our old friend—our grandfather's old friend. For it was a mistake: and there is no quarrel now, dear, is there? You were unkind to him under a wrong impression."

"I certainly acted under a wrong impression," owns George, "but——"

"George! George Washington!" Harry here cries out, springing over the cabbage-garden towards the bowling-green, where the Colonel was stalking, and though we cannot hear him, we see him, with both his hands out, and with the eagerness of youth, and with a hundred blunders, and with love and affection thrilling in his honest voice, we imagine the lad telling his tale to his friend.

There was a custom in those days which has disappeared from our manners now, but which then lingered. When Harry had finished his artless story, his friend the Colonel took him fairly to his arms, and held him to his heart: and his voice faltered as he said, "Thank God, thank God for this!"

"Oh, George," said Harry, who felt now how he loved his friend with all his heart, "how I wish I was going with you on the campaign!" The other pressed both the boy's hands, in a grasp of friendship, which, each knew, never would slacken.

Then the Colonel advanced, gravely holding out his hand to Harry's elder brother. Perhaps Harry wondered that the two did not embrace as he and the Colonel had just done. But, though hands were joined, the salutation was only formal and stern on both sides.

"I find I have done you a wrong, Colonel Washington," George said, "and must apologize, not for the error, but for much of my late behaviour which has resulted from it."

"The error was mine! It was I who found that paper in your room, and showed it to George, and was jealous of you, Colonel. All women are jealous," cried Mrs. Mountain.

"'Tis a pity you could not have kept your eyes off my paper, Madam," said Mr. Washington. "You will permit me to say so. A great deal of mischief has come because I chose to keep a secret which concerned only myself and another person. For a long time George Warrington's heart has been black with anger against me, and my feeling towards him has, I own, scarce been more friendly. All this pain might have been spared to both of us, had my private papers only been read by those for whom they were written. I shall say no more now, lest my feelings again should betray me into hasty words. Heaven bless thee, Harry! Farewell, George! And take a true friend's advice, and try and be less ready to think evil of your friends. We shall meet again at the camp, and will keep our weapons for the enemy. Gentlemen! if you remember this scene to-morrow, you will know where to find me." And with a very stately bow to the English officers, the Colonel left the abashed company, and speedily rode away.

CHAPTER XII.

NEWS FROM THE CAMP.

WE must fancy that the parting between the brothers is over, that George has taken his place in Mr. Braddock's family, and Harry has returned home to Castlewood and his duty. His heart is with the army, and his pursuits at home offer the boy no pleasure. He does not care to own how deep his disappointment is, at being obliged to stay under the homely, quiet roof, now more melancholy than ever since George is away. Harry passes his brother's empty chamber with an averted face; takes George's place at the head of the table, and sighs as he drinks from his silver tankard. Madam Warrington calls the toast of "The King" stoutly every day; and on Sundays, when Harry reads the Service, and prays for all travellers by land and by water, she says, "We beseech Thee to hear us," with a peculiar solemnity. She insists on talking about George constantly, but quite cheerfully, and as if his return was certain. She walks into his vacant room, with head upright, and no outward signs of emotion. She sees that his books, linen, papers, &c., are arranged with care; talking of him with a very special respect, and specially appealing to the old servants at meals, and so forth, regarding things which are to be done "when Mr. George comes home." Mrs. Mountain is constantly on the whimper when George's name is mentioned, and Harry's face wears a look of the most ghastly alarm; but his mother's is invariably grave and sedate. She makes more blunders at picquet and backgammon than you would expect from her; and the servants find her awake and dressed, however early they may rise. She has prayed Mr. Dempster to come back into residence at Castlewood. She is not severe or haughty (as her wont certainly was) with any of the party, but quiet in her talk with them, and gentle in assertion and reply. She is for ever talking of her father and his campaigns, who came out of them all with no very severe wounds to hurt him; and so she hopes and trusts will her eldest son.

George writes frequent letters home to his brother, and, now the army is on its march, compiles a rough journal, which he forwards as occasion serves. This document is perused with great delight and eagerness by the youth to whom it is addressed, and more than once read out in family council, on the long summer nights, as Madam Esmond sits upright at her tea-table—(she never condescends to use the back of a chair)—as little Fanny Mountain is busy with her sewing, as Mr. Dempster and Mrs. Mountain sit over their cards, as the hushed old servants of the house move about silently in the gloaming, and listen to the words of the young master. Hearken to Harry Warrington reading out his brother's letter! As we look at the slim characters on the yellow page, fondly kept and put aside, we can almost fancy him alive who wrote and who read it—and yet, lo! they are as if they never had been; their portraits faint images in frames of tarnished gold. Were they real once, or are they mere phantasms? Did they live and die once? Did they love each other as true brothers, and loyal gentlemen? Can we hear their voices in the past? Sure I know Harry's, and yonder he sits in the warm summer evening, and reads his young brother's simple story:—

"It must be owned that the provinces are acting scurvily by his Majesty King George II., and his representative here is in a flame of fury. Virginia is bad enough, and poor Maryland not much better, but Pennsylvania is worst of all. We pray them to send us troops from home to fight the French; and we promise to maintain the troops when they come. We not only don't keep our promise, and make scarce any provision for our defenders, but our people insist upon the most exorbitant prices for their cattle and stores, and actually cheat the soldiers who are come to fight their battles. No wonder the General swears, and the troops are sulky. The delays have been endless. Owing to the failure of the several provinces to provide their promised stores and means of locomotion, weeks and months have elapsed, during which time, no doubt, the French have been strengthening themselves on our frontier and in the forts they have turned us out of. Though there never will be any love lost between me and Colonel Washington, it must be owned that *your favourite* (I am not jealous, Hal,) is a brave man and a good officer. The family respect him very much, and the General is always asking his opinion. Indeed, he is almost the only man who has seen the Indians in their war-paint, and I own I think he was right in firing upon Mons. Jumonville last year.

"There is to be no more *suite* to that other quarrel at Benson's Tavern than there was to the proposed battle between Colonel W. and a certain young gentleman who shall be nameless. Captain Waring wished to pursue it on coming into camp, and brought the message from Captain Grace, which your friend, who is as bold as Hector, was for taking up, and employed a brother aide-de-camp, Colonel Wingfield, on his side. But when Wingfield heard the circumstances of the quarrel, how it had arisen from Grace being drunk, and was fomented by Waring being tipsy, and how the two 44th gentlemen had chosen to insult a militia officer, he swore that Colonel Washington should not meet the 44th men; that he would carry the matter straightway to his Excellency, who would bring the two captains to a court-martial for brawling with the militia, and drunkenness, and indecent behaviour, and the captains were fain to put up their toasting-irons, and swallow their wrath. They were good-natured enough out of their cups, and ate their humble pie with very good appetites at a reconciliation dinner which Colonel W. had with the 44th, and where he was as perfectly stupid and correct as Prince Prettyman need be. Hang him! He has no faults, and that's why I dislike him. When he marries that widow—ah me! what a dreary life she will have of it."

"I wonder at the taste of some men, and the effrontery of some women," says Madam Esmond, laying her teacup down. "I wonder at *any* woman who has been married once, so forgetting herself as to marry again! Don't you, Mountain?"

"Monstrous!" says Mountain, with a queer look.

Dempster keeps his eyes steadily fixed on his glass of punch. Harry looks as if he was choking with laughter, or with some other concealed emotion, but his mother says, "Go on, Harry! Continue with your brother's journal. He writes well: but, ah, will he ever be able to write like my papa?"

Harry resumes: "We keep the strictest order here in camp, and the orders against drunkenness and ill behaviour on the part of the men are very severe. The roll of each company is called at morning, noon, and night, and a return of the absent and disorderly is given in by the officer to the commanding officer of the regiment, who has to see that they are properly punished. The *men* are punished, and the drummers are always at work. Oh, Harry, but it made one sick to see the first blood drawn from a great strong white back, and to hear the piteous yell of the poor fellow."

"Oh, horrid!" says Madam Esmond.

"I think I should have murdered Ward if he had flogged me. Thank heaven he got off with only a crack of the ruler! The *men*, I say, are looked after carefully enough. I wish the officers were. The Indians have just broken up their camp, and retired in dudgeon, because the young officers were for ever drinking with the squaws—and—and—hum—ha." Here Mr. Harry pauses, as not caring to proceed with the narrative, in the presence of little Fanny, very likely, who sits primly in her chair by her mother's side, working her little sampler.

"Pass over that about the odious tipsy creatures," says Madam. And Harry commences, in a loud tone, a much more satisfactory statement: "Each regiment has Divine Service performed at the head of its colours every Sunday. The General does everything in the power of mortal man to prevent plundering, and to encourage the people round about to bring in provisions. He has declared soldiers shall be shot who dare to interrupt or molest the market people. He has ordered the price of provisions to be raised a penny a pound, and has lent money out of his own pocket to provide the camp. Altogether, he is a strange compound, this General. He flogs his men without mercy, but he gives without stint. He swears most tremendous oaths in conversation, and tells stories which Mountain would be shocked to hear——"

"Why *me?*" asks Mountain; "and what have I to do with the General's silly stories?"

"Never mind the stories; and go on, Harry," cries the mistress of the house.

"—would be shocked to hear after dinner; but he never misses service. He adores his Great Duke, and has his name constantly on his lips. Our two regiments both served in Scotland, where I dare say Mr. Dempster knew the colour of their facings."

"We saw the tails of their coats, as well as their facings," growls the little Jacobite tutor.

"Colonel Washington has had the fever very smartly, and has hardly been well enough to keep up with the march. Had he not better go home and be nursed by his widow? When either of us is ill, we are almost as good friends again as ever. But I feel somehow as if I can't forgive him for having wronged him. Good Powers! How I have been hating him for these months past! Oh, Harry! I was in a fury at the tavern the other day, because Mountain came up so soon, and put an end to our difference. We ought to have burned a little gunpowder between us, and cleared the air. But though I don't love him as you do, I know he is a good soldier, a good officer, and a brave, honest man; and, at any rate, shall love him none the worse for not wanting to be our step-father."

"A step-father, indeed!" cries Harry's mother. "Why, jealousy and prejudice have perfectly maddened the poor child! Do you suppose the Marquis of Esmond's daughter and heiress could not have found other step-fathers for her sons than a mere provincial surveyor? If there are any more such allusions in George's journal, I beg you skip 'em, Harry, my dear. About this piece of folly and blundering, there hath been quite talk enough already."

"'Tis a pretty sight," Harry continued, reading from his brother's journal, "to see a long line of red-coats, threading through the woods or taking their ground after the march. The care against surprise is so great and constant, that we defy prowling Indians to come unawares upon us, and our advanced sentries and savages have on the contrary fallen in with the enemy and taken a scalp or two from them. They are such cruel villains, these French and their painted allies, that we do not think of showing them mercy.

Only think, we found but yesterday a little boy scalped but yet alive in a lone house, where his parents had been attacked and murdered by the savage enemy, of whom—so great is his indignation at their cruelty—our General has offered a reward of 5*l.* for all the Indian scalps brought in.

"When our march is over, you should see our camp, and all the care bestowed on it. Our baggage and our General's tents and guard are placed quite in the centre of the camp. We have outlying sentries by twos, by threes, by tens, by whole companies. At the least surprise, they are instructed to run in on the main body and rally round the tents and baggage, which are so arranged themselves as to be a strong fortification. Sady and I, you must know, are marching on foot now, and my horses are carrying baggage. The Pennsylvanians sent such rascally animals into camp that they speedily gave in. What good horses were left 'twas our duty to give up: and Roxana has a couple of packs upon her back instead of her young master. She knows me right well, and whinnies when she sees me, and I walk by her side, and we have many a talk together on the march.

"July 4. To guard against surprises, we are all warned to pay especial attention to the beat of the drum; always halting when we hear the long roll beat, and marching at the beat of the long march. We are more on the alert regarding the enemy now. We have our advanced pickets doubled, and two sentries at every post. The men on the advanced pickets are constantly under arms, with fixed bayonets, all through the night, and relieved every two hours. The half that are relieved lie down by their arms, but are not suffered to leave their pickets. 'Tis evident that we are drawing very near to the enemy now. This packet goes out with the General's to Colonel Dunbar's camp, who is thirty miles behind us; and will be carried thence to Frederick, and thence to my honoured mother's house at Castlewood, to whom I send my duty, with kindest remembrances, as to all friends there, and how much love I need not say to my dearest brother from his affectionate GEORGE E. WARRINGTON."

The whole land was now lying parched and scorching in the July heat. For ten days no news had come from the column advancing on the Ohio. Their march, though it toiled but slowly through the painful forest, must bring them ere long up with the enemy; the troops, led by consummate captains, were accustomed now to the wilderness, and not afraid of surprise. Every precaution had been taken against ambush. It was the outlying enemy who were discovered, pursued, destroyed, by the vigilant scouts and skirmishers of the British force. The last news heard was that the army had advanced considerably beyond the ground of Mr. Washington's discomfiture in the previous year, and two days after must be within a day's march of the French fort. About taking it no fears were entertained; the amount of the French reinforcements from Montreal was known. Mr. Braddock, with his two veteran regiments from Britain, and their allies of Virginia and Pennsylvania, were more than a match for any troops that could be collected under the white flag.

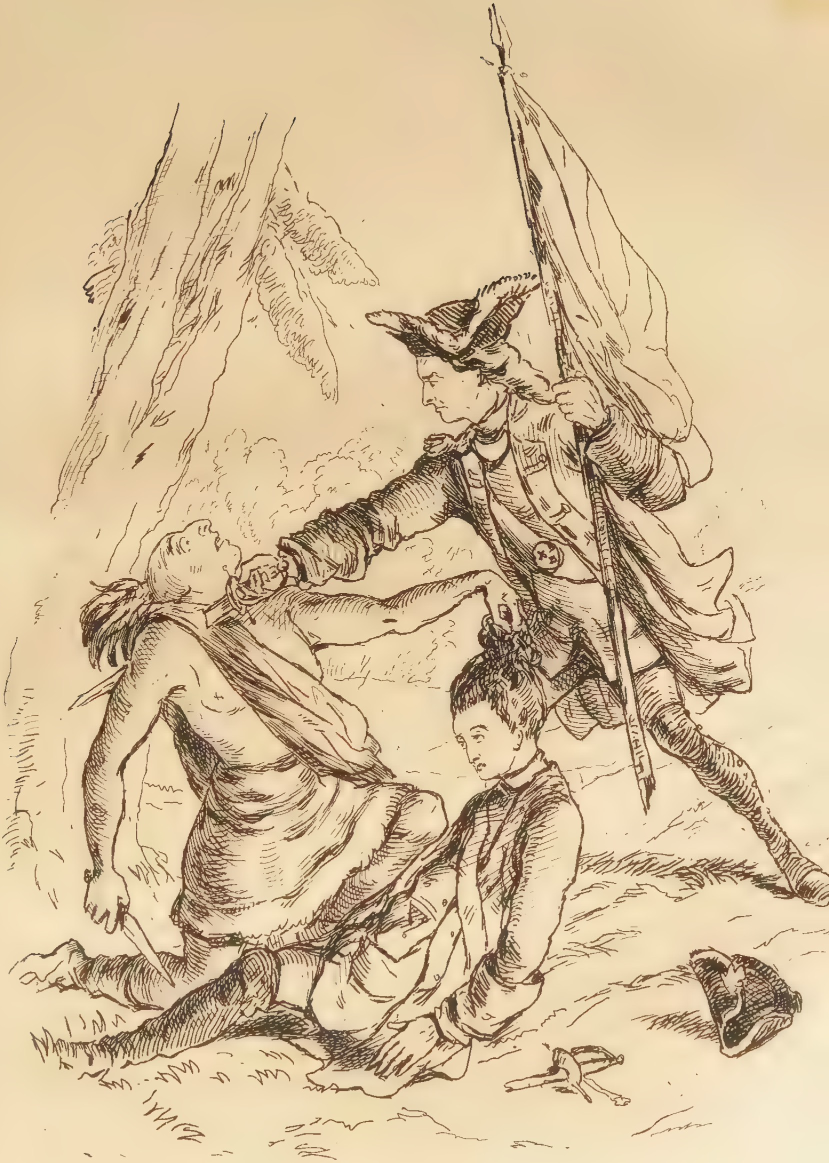
Such continued to be the talk, in the sparse towns of our Virginian province, at the gentry's houses, and the rough road-side taverns, where people met and canvassed the war. The few messengers who were sent back by the General reported well of the main force. 'Twas thought the enemy would not stand or defend himself at all. Had he intended to attack, he might have seized a dozen occasions for assaulting our troops at passes through which they had been allowed to go entirely free. So George had given up his favourite mare, like a hero as he was, and was marching a-foot with the line? Madam Esmond vowed that he should have the best horse in Virginia or Carolina in place of Roxana. There were horses enough to be had in the provinces, and for money. It was only for the King's service that they were not forthcoming.

Although at their family meetings and repasts the inmates of Castlewood always talked cheerfully, never anticipating any but a triumphant issue to the campaign, or acknowledging any feeling of disquiet, yet, it must be owned they were mighty uneasy when at home, quitting it ceaselessly, and for ever on the trot from one neighbour's house to another in quest of news. It was prodigious how quickly reports ran and spread. When, for instance, a certain noted border warrior, called Colonel Jack, had offered himself and his huntsmen to the General, who had declined the ruffian's terms or his proffered service, the defection of Jack and his men was the talk of thousands of tongues immediately. The house negroes, in their midnight gallops about the country, in search of junketing or sweethearts, brought and spread news over amazingly wide districts. They had a curious knowledge of the incidents of the march for a fortnight at least after its commencement. They knew and laughed at the cheats practised on the army for horses, provisions, and the like; for a good bargain over the foreigner was not an unfrequent or unpleasant practice among New Yorkers, Pennsylvanians, or Marylanders; though 'tis known that American folks have become perfectly artless and simple in later times, and never grasp, and never overreach, and are never selfish now. For three weeks after the army's departure, the thousand reports regarding it were cheerful; and when our Castlewood friends met at their supper, their tone was confident and their news pleasant.

But on the 10th of July a vast and sudden gloom spread over the province. A look of terror and doubt seemed to fall upon every face. Affrighted negroes wistfully eyed their masters and retired, and hummed and whispered with one another. The fiddles ceased in the quarters: the song and laugh of those cheery black folk were hushed. Right and left, everybody's servants were on the gallop for news. The country taverns were thronged with horsemen, who drank and cursed and brawled at the bars, each bringing his gloomy story. The army had been surprised. The troops had fallen into an ambuscade, and had been cut up almost to a man. All the officers were taken down by the French marksmen and the savages. The General had been wounded, and carried off the field in his sash. Four days afterwards the report was that the General was dead, and scalped by a French Indian.

Ah, what a scream poor Mrs. Mountain gave, when Gumbo brought this news from across the James River, and little Fanny sprang crying to her mother's arms! "Lord God Almighty, watch over us, and defend my boy!" said Mrs. Esmond, sinking down on her knees, and lifting her rigid hands to Heaven. The gentlemen were not at home when this rumour arrived, but they came in an hour or two afterwards, each from his hunt for news. The Scots tutor did not dare to look up and meet the widow's agonising looks. Harry Warrington was as pale as his mother. It might not be true about the manner of the General's death—but he was dead. The army had been surprised by Indians, and had fled, and been killed without seeing the enemy. An express had arrived from Dunbar's camp. Fugitives were pouring in there. Should he go and see? He must go and see. He and stout little Dempster armed themselves and mounted, taking a couple of mounted servants with them.

They followed the northward track which the expeditionary army had hewed out for itself, and at every step which brought them nearer to the scene of action, the disaster of the fearful day seemed to magnify. The day after the defeat a number of the miserable fugitives from the fatal battle of the 9th July had reached Dunbar's camp, fifty miles from the field. Thither poor Harry and his companions rode, stopping stragglers, asking news, giving money, getting from one and all the same gloomy tale—A thousand men were slain—two-thirds of the officers were down—all the General's aides-de-camp were hit. Were hit?—but were they killed? Those who fell never rose again. The tomahawk did its work upon them. O brother, brother! All the fond memories of their youth, all the dear remembrances of their childhood, the love and the laughter, the tender romantic vows which they had pledged to each other as lads, were recalled by Harry with pangs inexpressibly keen. Wounded men looked up and were softened by his grief: rough women melted as they saw the woe written on the handsome young face: the hardy old tutor could scarcely look at him for tears, and grieved for him even more than for his dear pupil who lay dead under the savage Indian knife.



THE WILDERNESS

CHAPTER XIII.

PROFITLESS QUEST.

AT every step which Harry Warrington took towards Pennsylvania, the reports of the British disaster were magnified and confirmed. Those two famous regiments which had fought in the Scottish and Continental wars, had fled from an enemy almost unseen, and their boasted discipline and valour had not enabled them to face a band of savages and a few French infantry. The unfortunate commander of the expedition had shown the utmost bravery and resolution. Four times his horse had been shot under him. Twice he had been wounded, and the last time of the mortal hurt which ended his life three days after the battle. More than one of Harry's informants described the action to the poor lad,—the passage of the river, the long line of advance through the wilderness, the firing in front, the vain struggle of the men to advance, and the artillery to clear the way of the enemy; then the ambushed fire from behind every bush and tree, and the murderous fusilade, by which at least half of the expeditionary force had been shot down. But not all the General's suite were killed, Harry heard. One of his aides-de camp, a Virginian gentleman, was ill of fever and exhaustion at Dunbar's camp.

One of them—but which? To the camp Harry hurried, and reached it at length. It was George Washington Harry found stretched in a tent there, and not his brother. A sharper pain than that of the fever Mr. Washington declared he felt, when he saw Harry Warrington, and could give him no news of George.

Mr. Washington did not dare to tell Harry all. For three days after the fight his duty had been to be near the General. On the fatal 9th of July, he had seen George go to the front with orders from the chief, to whose side he never returned. After Braddock himself died, the aide-de-camp had found means to retrace his course to the field. The corpses which remained there were stripped and horribly mutilated. One body he buried which he thought to be George Warrington's. His own illness was increased, perhaps occasioned, by the anguish which he underwent in his search for the unhappy young volunteer.

"Ah, George! If you had loved him you would have found him dead or alive," Harry cried out. Nothing would satisfy him but that he, too, should go to the ground and examine it. With money he procured a guide or two. He forded the river at the place where the army had passed over; he went from one end to the other of the dreadful field. It was no longer haunted by Indians now. The birds of prey were feeding on the mangled festering carcases. Save in his own grandfather, lying very calm, with a sweet smile on his lip, Harry had never yet seen the face of Death. The horrible spectacle of mutilation caused him to turn away with shudder and loathing. What news could the vacant woods, or those festering corpses lying under the trees, give the lad of his lost brother? He was for going, unarmed and with a white flag, to the French fort, whither, after their victory, the enemy had returned; but his guides refused to advance with him. The French might possibly respect them, but the Indians would not. "Keep your hair for your lady-mother, my young gentleman," said the guide. "'Tis enough that she loses one son in this campaign."

When Harry returned to the English encampment at Dunbar's, it was his turn to be down with the fever. Delirium set in upon him, and he lay some time in the tent and on the bed from which his friend had just risen convalescent. For some days he did not know who watched him: and poor Dempster, who had tended him in more than one of these maladies, thought the widow must lose both her children; but the fever was so far subdued that the boy was enabled to rally somewhat, and get to horseback. Mr. Washington and Dempster both escorted him home. It was with a heavy heart, no doubt, that all three beheld once more the gates of Castlewood.

A servant in advance had been sent to announce their coming. First came Mrs. Mountain and her little daughter, welcoming Harry with many tears and embraces; but she scarce gave a nod of recognition to Mr. Washington; and the little girl caused the young officer to start, and turn deadly pale, by coming up to him with her hands behind her, and asking, "Why have you not brought George back, too?" Harry did not hear. The sobs and caresses of his good friend and nurse luckily kept him from listening to little Fanny.

Dempster was graciously received by the two ladies. "Whatever could be done, we know *you* would do, Mr. Dempster," says Mrs. Mountain, giving him her hand. "Make a curtsey to Mr. Dempster, Fanny, and remember, child, to be grateful to all who have been friendly to our benefactors. Will it please you to take any refreshment before you ride, Colonel Washington?"

Mr. Washington had had a sufficient ride already, and counted as certainly upon the hospitality of Castlewood, as he would upon the shelter of his own house.

"The time to feed my horse, and a glass of water for myself, and I will trouble Castlewood hospitality no farther," Mr. Washington said.

"Sure, George, you have your room here, and my mother is above stairs getting it ready!" cries Harry. "That poor horse of yours stumbled with you, and can't go farther this evening."

"Hush! Your mother won't see him, child," whispered Mrs. Mountain.

"Not see George? Why, he is like a son of the house," cries Harry.

"She had best not see him. *I* don't meddle any more in family matters, child: but when the Colonel's servant rode in, and said you were coming, Madam Esmond left this room, my dear, where she was sitting reading 'Drelincourt,' and said she felt she could not see Mr. Washington. Will you go to her?" Harry took his friend's arm, and excusing himself to the Colonel, to whom he said he would return in a few minutes, he left the parlour in which they had assembled, and went to the upper rooms, where Madam Esmond was.

He was hastening across the corridor, and, with an averted head, passing by one especial door, which he did not like to look at, for it was that of his brother's room; but as he came to it, Madam Esmond issued from it, and folded him to her heart, and led him in. A settee was by the bed, and a book of psalms lay on the coverlet. All the rest of the room was exactly as George had left it.

"My poor child! How thin thou art grown—how haggard you look! Never mind. A mother's care will make thee well again. 'Twas nobly done to go and brave sickness and danger in search of your brother. Had others been as faithful, he might be here now. Never mind, my Harry; our hero will come back to us,—I know he is not dead. One so good, and so brave, and so gentle, and so clever as he was, I know is not lost to us altogether." (Perhaps Harry thought within himself that his mother had not always been accustomed so to speak of her eldest son.) "Dry up thy tears, my dear! He will come back to us, I know he will come." And when Harry pressed her to give a reason for her belief, she said she had seen her father two nights running in a dream, and he had told her that her boy was a prisoner among the Indians.

Madam Esmond's grief had not prostrated her as Harry's had when first it fell upon him; it had rather stirred and animated her: her eyes were eager, her countenance angry and revengeful. The lad wondered almost at the condition in which he found his mother.

But when he besought her to go downstairs, and give a hand of welcome to George Washington, who had accompanied him, the lady's excitement painfully increased. She said she should shudder at touching his hand. She declared Mr. Washington had taken her son from her, she could not sleep under the same roof with him.

"He gave me his bed when I was ill, mother; and if our George is alive, how has George Washington a hand in his death? Ah! please God it be only as you say," cried Harry, in bewilderment.

"If your brother returns, as return he will, it will not be through Mr. Washington's help," said Madam Esmond. "He neither defended George on the field, nor would he bring him out of it."

"But he tended me most kindly in my fever," interposed Harry. "He was yet ill when he gave up his bed to me, and was thinking of his friend, when any other man would have thought only of himself."

"A friend! A pretty friend!" sneers the lady. "Of all his Excellency's aides-de-camp, my gentleman is the only one who comes back unwounded. The brave and noble fall, but he, to be sure, is unhurt. I confide my boy to him, the pride of my life, whom he will defend with his, forsooth! And he leaves my George in the forest, and brings me back himself! Oh, a pretty welcome I must give him!"

"No gentleman," cried Harry, warmly, "was ever refused shelter under my grandfather's roof."

"Oh, no,—no *gentleman!*" exclaims the little widow; "let us go down, if you like, son, and pay our respects to this one. Will you please to give me your arm?" and taking an arm which was very little able to give her support, she walked down the broad stairs, and into the apartment where the Colonel sat.

She made him a ceremonious curtsey, and extended one of the little hands, which she allowed for a moment to rest in his. "I wish that our meeting had been happier, Colonel Washington," she said.

"You do not grieve more than I do that it is otherwise, Madam," said the Colonel.

"I might have wished that the meeting had been spared, that I might not have kept you from friends whom you are naturally anxious to see,—that my boy's indisposition had not detained you. Home and his good nurse Mountain, and his mother and our good Doctor Dempster will soon restore him. 'Twas scarce necessary, Colonel, that you who have so many affairs on your hands, military and domestic, should turn doctor too."

"Harry was ill and weak, and I thought it was my duty to ride by him," faltered the Colonel.

"You yourself, sir, have gone through the *fatigues* and *dangers* of the campaign in the most wonderful manner," said the widow, curtseying again, and looking at him with her impenetrable black eyes.

"I wish to Heaven, Madam, some one else had come back in my place!"

"Nay, sir, you have ties which must render your life more than ever valuable and dear to you, and duties to which, I know, you must be anxious to betake yourself. In our present deplorable state of doubt and distress, Castlewood can be a welcome place to no stranger, much less to you, and so I know, sir, you will be for leaving us ere long. And you will pardon me if the state of my own spirits obliges me for the most part to keep my chamber. But my friends here will bear you company as long as you favour us, whilst I nurse my poor Harry upstairs. Mountain! you will have the cedar room on the ground-floor ready for Mr. Washington, and anything in the house is at his command. Farewell, sir. Will you be pleased to present my compliments to your mother, who will be thankful to have her son safe and sound out of the war,—as also to my young friend Martha Curtis, to whom and to whose children I wish every happiness. Come, my son!" and with these words, and another freezing curtsey, the pale little woman retreated, looking steadily at the Colonel, who stood dumb on the floor.

Strong as Madam Esmond's belief appeared to be respecting her son's safety, the house of Castlewood naturally remained sad and gloomy. She might forbid mourning for herself and family; but her heart was in black, whatever face the resolute little lady persisted in wearing before the world. To look for her son was hoping against hope. No authentic account of his death had indeed arrived, and no one appeared who had seen him fall; but hundreds more had been so stricken on that fatal day, with no eyes to behold their last pangs, save those of the lurking enemy and the comrades dying by their side. A fortnight after the defeat, when Harry was absent on his quest, George's servant, Sady, reappeared wounded and maimed at Castlewood. But he could give no coherent account of the battle, only of his flight from the centre, where he was with the baggage. He had no news of his master since the morning of the action. For many days Sady lurked in the negro quarters away from the sight of Madam Esmond, whose anger he did not dare to face. That lady's few neighbours spoke of her as labouring under a delusion. So strong was it, that there were times when Harry and the other members of the little Castlewood family were almost brought to share in it. It seemed nothing strange to *her*, that her father out of another world should promise her her son's life. In this world or the next, that family sure must be of consequence, she thought. Nothing had ever yet happened to her sons: no accident, no fever, no important illness, but she had a prevision of it. She could enumerate half-a-dozen instances, which, indeed, her household was obliged more or less to confirm, how, when anything had happened to the boys at ever so great a distance, she had known of their mishap and its consequences. No, George was not dead; George was a prisoner among the Indians; George would come back and rule over Castlewood; as sure, as sure as his Majesty would send a great force from home to recover the tarnished glory of the British arms, and to drive the French out of the Americas.

As for Mr. Washington, she would never, with her own good will, behold him again. He had promised to protect George with his life. Why was her son gone and the Colonel alive? How dared he to face her after that promise, and appear before a mother without her son? She trusted she knew her duty. She bore ill will to no one: but as an Esmond, she had a sense of honour, and Mr. Washington had forfeited his in letting her son out of his sight. He had to obey superior orders (some one perhaps objected)? Psha! a promise was a promise. He had promised to guard George's life with his own, and where was her boy? And was not the Colonel (a pretty *Colonel*, indeed!) sound and safe? "Do not tell me that his coat and hat had shots through them!" (This was her answer to another humble plea in Mr. Washington's behalf.) "Can't I go into the study this instant and fire two shots with my papa's pistols through this paduasoy skirt,—and should *I* be killed?" She laughed at the notion of death resulting from any such operation; nor was her laugh very pleasant to hear. The satire of people who have little natural humour is seldom good sport for bystanders. I think dull men's *facetiæ* are mostly cruel.

So, if Harry wanted to meet his friend, he had to do so in secret, at court-houses, taverns, or various places of resort; or in their little towns, where the provincial gentry assembled. No man of spirit, she vowed, could meet Mr. Washington after his base desertion of her family. She was exceedingly excited when she heard that the

Colonel and her son absolutely had met. What a *heart* must Harry have to give his hand to one whom she considered as little better than George's murderer! For shame to say so! "For shame upon *you*, ungrateful boy, forgetting the dearest, noblest, most perfect of brothers, for that tall, gawky, fox-hunting Colonel, with his horrid oaths! How can he be George's murderer, when I say my boy is not dead? He is not dead, because my instinct never deceived me: because, as sure as I see his picture now before me,—only 'tis not near so noble or so good as he used to look,—so surely two nights running did my papa appear to me in my dreams. You doubt about that, very likely? 'Tis because you never loved anybody sufficiently, my poor Harry; else you might have leave to see them in dreams, as has been vouchsafed to some."

"I think I loved George, mother," cried Harry. "I have often prayed that I might dream about him, and I don't."

"How you can talk, sir, of loving George, and then go and meet your Mr. Washington at horse-races, I can't understand! Can you, Mountain?"

"We can't understand many things in our neighbours' characters. I can understand that our boy is unhappy, and that he does not get strength, and that he is doing no good here, in Castlewood, or moping at the taverns and court-houses with horse-coupers and idle company," grumbled Mountain in reply to her patroness; and, in truth, the dependant was right.

There was not only grief in the Castlewood House, but there was disunion. "I cannot tell how it came," said Harry, as he brought the story to an end, which we have narrated in the preceding pages, and which he confided to his new-found English relative, Madame de Bernstein; "but since that fatal day of July, last year, and my return home, my mother never has been the same woman. She seemed to love none of us as she used. She was for ever praising George, and yet she did not seem as if she liked him much when he was with us. She hath plunged, more deeply than ever, into her books of devotion, out of which she only manages to extract grief and sadness, as I think. Such a gloom has fallen over our wretched Virginian House of Castlewood, that we all grew ill, and pale as ghosts, who inhabited it. Mountain told me, Madam, that, for nights, my mother would not close her eyes. I have had her at my bedside, looking so ghastly, that I have started from my own sleep, fancying a ghost before me.

By one means or other she has wrought herself into a state of excitement which, if not delirium, is akin to it. I was again and again struck down by the fever, and all the Jesuits' bark in America could not cure me. We have a tobacco-house and some land about the new town of Richmond, in our province, and I went thither, as Williamsburg is no wholesomer than our own place; and there I mended a little, but still did not get quite well, and the physicians strongly counselled a sea-voyage. My mother, at one time, had thoughts of coming with me, but"—(and here the lad blushed and hung his head down)—"we did not agree very well, though I know we loved each other very heartily, and 'twas determined that I should see the world for myself. So I took passage in our ship from the James River, and was landed at Bristol. And 'twas only on the 9th of July, this year, at sea, as had been agreed between me and Madam Esmond, that I put mourning on for my dear brother."

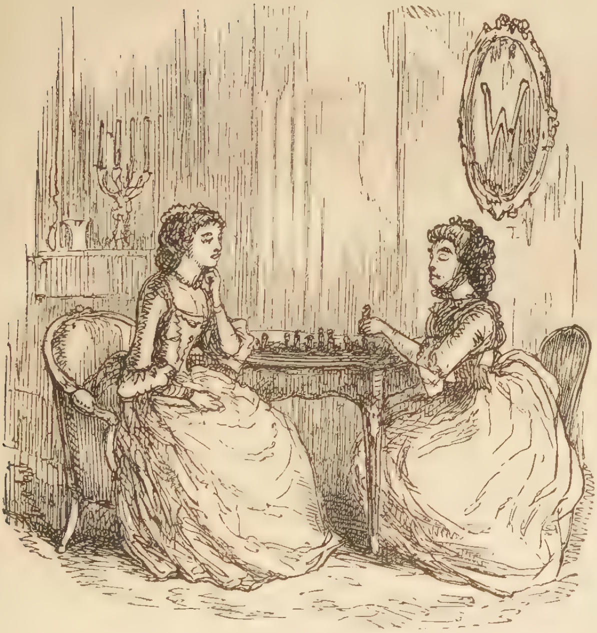
So that little Mistress of the Virginian Castlewood, for whom, I am sure, we have all the greatest respect, had the knack of rendering the people round about her uncomfortable; quarrelled with those she loved best, and exercised over them her wayward jealousies and imperious humours, until they were not sorry to leave her. Here was money enough, friends enough, a good position, and the respect of the world; a house stored with all manner of plenty, and good things, and poor Harry Warrington was glad to leave them all behind him. Happy! Who is happy? What good in a stalled ox for dinner every day, and no content therewith? Is it best to be loved and plagued by those you love, or to have an easy, comfortable indifference at home; to follow your fancies, live there unmolested, and die without causing any painful regrets or tears?

To be sure, when her boy was gone, Madam Esmond forgot all these little tiffs and differences. To hear her speak of both her children, you would fancy they were perfect characters, and had never caused her a moment's worry or annoyance. These gone, Madam fell naturally upon Mrs. Mountain and her little daughter, and worried and annoyed them. But women bear with hard words more easily than men, are more ready to forgive injuries, or, perhaps, to dissemble anger. Let us trust that Madam Esmond's dependants found their life tolerable, that they gave her ladyship sometimes as good as they got, that if they quarrelled in the morning they were reconciled at night, and sat down to a tolerably friendly game at cards and an amicable dish of tea.

But, without the boys, the great house of Castlewood was dreary to the widow. She left an overseer there to manage her estates, and only paid the place an occasional visit. She enlarged and beautified her house in the pretty little city of Richmond, which began to grow daily in importance. She had company there, and card assemblies, and preachers in plenty; and set up her little throne there, to which the gentlefolks of the province were welcome to come and bow. All her domestic negroes, who loved society as negroes will do, were delighted to exchange the solitude of Castlewood for the gay and merry little town; where, for a time, and while we pursue Harry Warrington's progress in Europe, we leave the good lady.

CHAPTER XIV.

HARRY IN ENGLAND.



WHEN the famous Trojan wanderer narrated his escapes and adventures to Queen Dido, her Majesty, as we read, took the very greatest interest in the fascinating story-teller who told his perils so eloquently. A history ensued, more pathetic than any of the previous occurrences in the life of Pius Æneas, and the poor princess had reason to rue the day when she listened to that glib and dangerous orator. Harry Warrington had not pious Æneas's power of speech, and his elderly aunt, we may presume, was by no means so soft-hearted as the sentimental Dido; but yet the lad's narrative was touching, as he delivered it with his artless eloquence and cordial voice; and more than once, in the course of his story, Madam Bernstein found herself moved to a softness to which she had very seldom before allowed herself to give way. There were not many fountains in that desert of a life—not many sweet refreshing resting-places. It had been a long loneliness, for the most part, until this friendly voice came and sounded in her ears and caused her heart to beat with strange pangs of love and sympathy. She doted on this lad, and on this sense of compassion and regard so new to her. Save once, faintly, in very very early youth, she had felt no tender sentiment for any human being. Such a woman would, no doubt, watch her own sensations very keenly, and must have smiled after the appearance of this boy, to mark how her pulses rose above their ordinary beat. She longed after him. She felt her cheeks flush with happiness when he came near. Her eyes greeted him with welcome, and followed him with fond pleasure. "Ah, if she could have had a son like that, how she would have loved him!" "Wait," says Conscience, the dark scoffer mocking within her, "wait, Beatrix Esmond! You know you will weary of this inclination, as you have of all. You know, when the passing fancy has subsided, that the boy may perish, and you won't have a tear for him; or talk, and you weary of his stories; and that your lot in life is to be lonely—lonely." Well? suppose life *be* a desert? There are halting-places and shades, and refreshing waters; let us profit by them for to-day. We know that we must march when to-morrow comes, and tramp on our destiny onward.

She smiled inwardly, whilst following the lad's narrative, to recognize in his simple tales about his mother traits of family resemblance. Madam Esmond was very jealous?—Yes, that Harry owned. She was fond of Colonel Washington? She liked him, but only as a friend, Harry declared. A hundred times he had heard his mother vow that she had no other feeling towards him. He was ashamed to have to own that he himself had been once absurdly jealous of the Colonel. "Well, you will see that my half-sister will never forgive him," said Madam Beatrix. "And *you* need not be surprised, sir, at women taking a fancy to men younger than themselves; for don't I dote upon you; and don't all these Castlewood people *crèvent* with jealousy?"

However great might be their jealousy of Madame de Bernstein's new favourite, the family of Castlewood allowed no feeling of ill will to appear in their language or behaviour to their young guest and kinsman. After a couple of days' stay in the ancestral house, Mr. Harry Warrington had become Cousin Harry with young and middle-aged. Especially in Madame Bernstein's presence, the

Countess of Castlewood was most gracious to her kinsman, and she took many amiable private opportunities of informing the Baroness how charming the young Huron was, of vaunting the elegance of his manners and appearance, and wondering how, in his distant province, the child should ever have learned to be so polite?

These notes of admiration or interrogation, the Baroness took with equal complacency. (Speaking parenthetically, and, for his own part, the present chronicler cannot help putting in a little respectful remark here, and signifying his admiration of the conduct of ladies towards one another, and of the things which they say, which they forbear to say, and which they say behind each other's backs. With what smiles and curtseys they stab each other! with what compliments they hate each other! with what determination of long-suffering they won't be offended! with what innocent dexterity they can drop the drop of poison into the cup of conversation, hand round the goblet, smiling, to the whole family to drink, and make the dear domestic circle miserable!)—I burst out of my parenthesis. I fancy my Baroness and Countess smiling at each other a hundred years ago, and giving each other the hand or the cheek, and calling each other, My dear, My dear creature, My dear Countess, My dear Baroness, My dear sister—even, when they were most ready to fight.

"You wonder, my dear Anna, that the boy should be so polite?" cries Madame de Bernstein. "His mother was bred up by two very perfect gentlefolks. Colonel Esmond had a certain grave courteousness, and a grand manner, which I do not see among the gentlemen now-a-days."

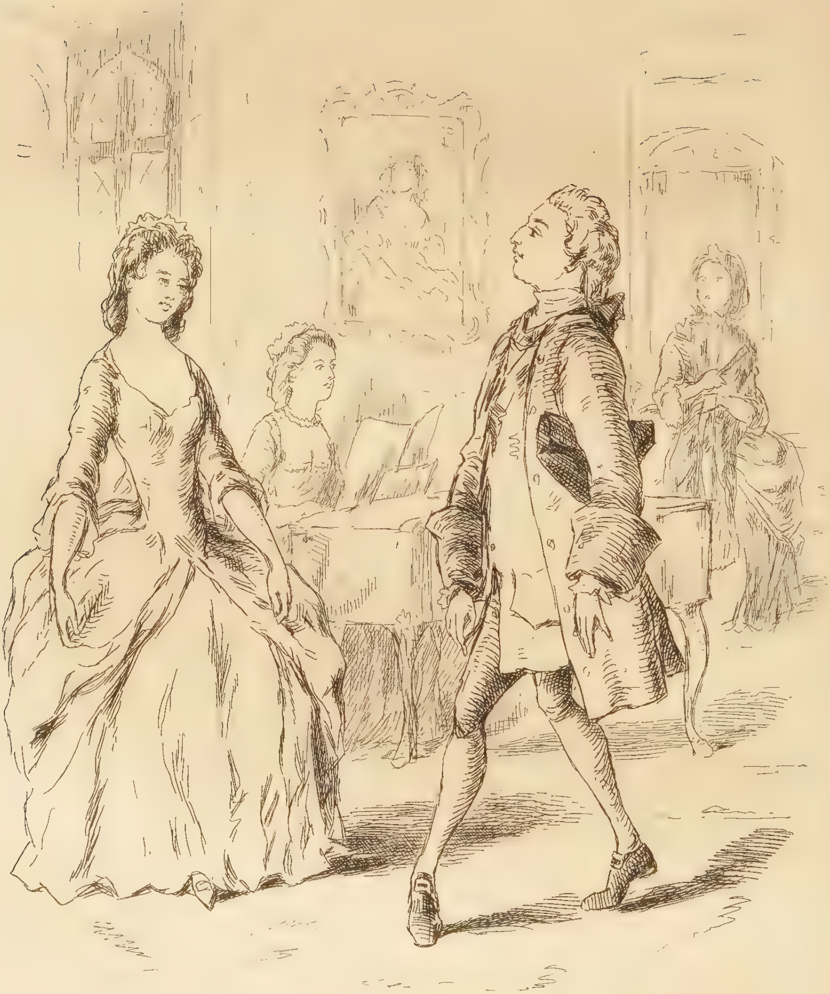
"Eh, my dear, we all of us praise our own time! My grandmamma used to declare there was nothing like Whitehall and Charles the Second."

"My mother saw King James the Second's court for a short while, and though not a court-educated person, as you know—her father was a country clergyman—yet was exquisitely well bred. The Colonel, her second husband, was a person of great travel and experience, as well as of learning, and had frequented the finest company of Europe. They could not go into their retreat and leave their good manners behind them, and our boy has had them as his natural inheritance."

"Nay, excuse me, my dear, for thinking you too partial about your mother. She *could* not have been that perfection which your filial fondness imagines. She left off liking her daughter—my dear creature, you have owned that she did—and I cannot fancy a complete woman who has a cold heart. No, no, my dear sister-in-law! Manners are very requisite, no doubt, and, for a country parson's daughter, your mamma was very well—I have seen many of the cloth who are very well. Mr. Sampson, our chaplain, is very well. Dr. Young is very well. Mr. Dodd is very well; but they have not the true air—as how should they? I protest, I beg pardon! I forgot my lord bishop, your ladyship's first choice. But, as I said before, to be a complete woman, one must have, what you have, what I may say, and bless heaven for, I think *I* have—a *good* heart. Without the affections, all the world is vanity, my love! I protest I only live, exist, eat, drink, rest, for my sweet, sweet children!—for my wicked Willy, for my self-willed Fanny, dear naughty loves!" (She rapturously kisses a bracelet on each arm which contains the miniature representations of those two young persons.) "Yes, Mimi! yes, Fanchon! you know I do, you dear, dear little things! and if they were to die, or you were to die, your poor mistress would die, too!" Mimi and Fanchon, two quivering Italian greyhounds, jump into their lady's arms, and kiss her hands, but respect her cheeks, which are covered with rouge. "No, my dear! For nothing do I bless heaven so much (though it puts me to excruciating torture very often) as for having endowed me with sensibility and a feeling heart!"

"You are full of feeling, dear Anna," says the Baroness. "You are celebrated for your sensibility. You must give a little of it to our American nephew—cousin—I scarce know his relationship."

"Nay, I am here but as a guest in Castlewood now. The house is my Lord Castlewood's, not mine, or his lordship's whenever he shall choose to claim it. What can I do for the young Virginian that has not been done? He is charming. Are we even jealous of him for being so, my dear? and though we see what a fancy the Baroness de Bernstein has taken for him, do your ladyship's nephews and nieces—your *real* nephews and nieces—cry out? My poor children might be mortified, for indeed, in a few hours, the charming young man has made as much way as *my* poor things have been able to do in all their lives: but are they angry? Willy hath taken him out to ride. This morning, was not Maria playing the harpsichord



A DANCING LESSON.

whilst my Fanny taught him the minuet? 'Twas a charming young group, I assure you, and it brought tears into my eyes to look at the young creatures. Poor lad! we are as fond of him as you are, dear Baroness!"

Now, Madame de Bernstein had happened, through her own ears or her maid's, to overhear what really took place in consequence of this harmless little scene. Lady Castlewood had come into the room where the young people were thus engaged in amusing and instructing themselves, accompanied by her son William, who arrived in his boots from the kennel.

"Bravi, bravi! Oh, charming!" said the Countess, clapping her hands, nodding with one of her best smiles to Harry Warrington, and darting a look at his partner, which my Lady Fanny perfectly understood; and so, perhaps, did my Lady Maria at her harpsichord, for she played with redoubled energy, and nodded her waving curls over the chords.

"Infernal young Choctaw! Is he teaching Fanny the war-dance? and is Fan going to try her tricks upon him now?" asked Mr. William, whose temper was not of the best.

And that was what Lady Castlewood's look said to Fanny. "Are you going to try your tricks upon him now?"

She made Harry a very low curtsey, and he blushed, and they both stopped dancing, somewhat disconcerted. Lady Maria rose from the harpsichord and walked away.

"Nay, go on dancing, young people! Don't let me spoil sport, and let me play for you," said the Countess; and she sat down to the instrument and played.

"I don't know how to dance," says Harry, hanging his head down, with a blush that the Countess's finest carmine could not equal.

"And Fanny was teaching you? Go on teaching him, dearest Fanny!"

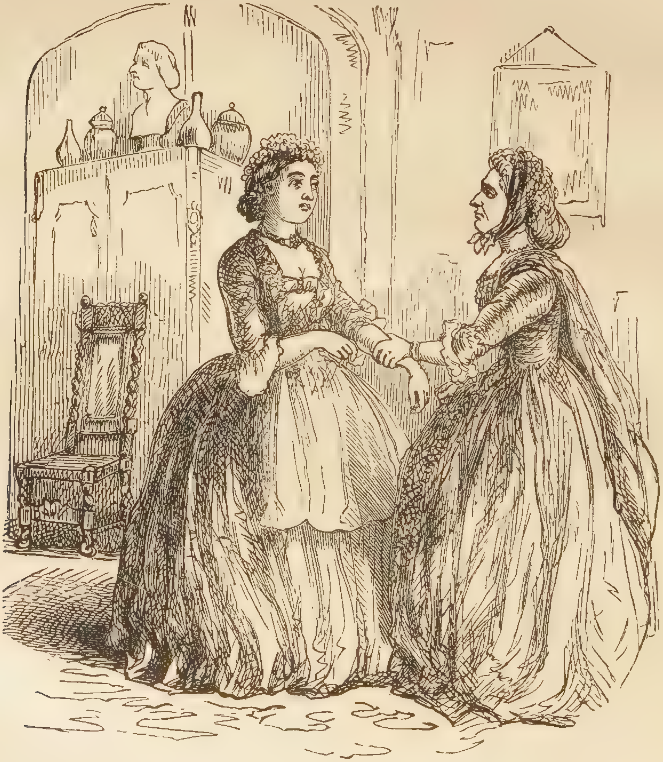
"Go on, do!" says William, with a sidelong growl.

"I—I had rather not show off my awkwardness in company," adds Harry, recovering himself. "When I know how to dance a minuet, be sure I will ask my cousin to walk one with me."

"That will be *very* soon, dear Cousin Warrington, I am certain," remarks the Countess, with her most gracious air.

"What game is she hunting now?" thinks Mr. William to himself, who cannot penetrate his mother's ways; and that lady, fondly calling her daughter to her elbow, leaves the room.

They are no sooner in the tapestried passage leading away to their own apartment, but Lady Castlewood's bland tone entirely changes. "You booby!" she begins to her adored Fanny. "You double idiot! What are you going to do with the Huron? You don't want to marry a creature like that, and be a squaw in a wigwam?"



"Don't, mamma!" gasped Lady Fanny. Mamma was pinching her ladyship's arm black and blue. "I am sure our cousin is very well," Fanny whimpers, "and you said so yourself."

"Very well! Yes; and heir to a swamp, a negro, a log-cabin and a barrel of tobacco! My Lady Frances Esmond, do you remember what your ladyship's rank is, and what your name is, and who was your ladyship's mother, when, at three days' acquaintance, you commence dancing—a pretty dance, indeed!—with this brat out of Virginia."

"Mr. Warrington is our cousin," pleads Lady Fanny.

"A creature come from nobody knows where is not your cousin! How do we know he is your cousin? He may be a valet who has taken his master's portmanteau, and run away in his post-chaise."

"But Madame de Bernstein says he is our cousin," interposes Fanny; "and he is the image of the Esmonds."

"Madame de Bernstein has her likes and dislikes, takes up people and forgets people; and she chooses to profess a mighty fancy for this young man. Because she likes him to-day, is that any reason why she should like him to-morrow? Before company, and in your aunt's presence, your ladyship will please to be as civil to him as necessary; but, in private, I forbid you to see him or encourage him."

"I don't care, Madam, whether your ladyship forbids me or not!" cries out Lady Fanny, wrought up to a pitch of revolt.

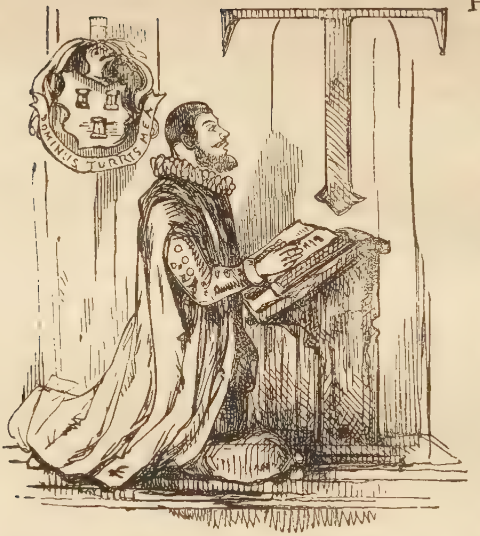
"Very good, Fanny! then I speak to my lord, and we return to Kensington. If I can't bring you to reason, your brother will."

At this juncture the conversation between mother and daughter stopped, or Madame de Bernstein's informer had no further means of hearing or reporting it.

It was only in after-days that she told Harry Warrington a part of what she knew. At present he but saw that his kinsfolks received him not unkindly. Lady Castlewood was perfectly civil to him; the young ladies pleasant and pleased; my Lord Castlewood, a man of cold and haughty demeanour, was not more reserved towards Harry than to any of the rest of the family; Mr. William was ready to drink with him, to ride with him, to go to races with him, and to play cards with him. When he proposed to go away, they one and all pressed him to stay. Madame de Bernstein did not tell him how it arose that he was the object of such eager hospitality. He did not know what schemes he was serving or disarranging, whose or what anger he was creating. He fancied he was welcome because those around him were his kinsmen, and never thought that those could be his enemies out of whose cup he was drinking, and whose hand he was pressing every night and morning.

CHAPTER XV.

A SUNDAY AT CASTLEWOOD.



THE second day after Harry's arrival at Castlewood was a Sunday. The chapel appertaining to the castle was the village church. A door from the house communicated with a great state pew which the family occupied, and here, after due time, they all took their places in order, whilst a rather numerous congregation from the village filled the seats below. A few ancient dusty banners hung from the church roof; and Harry pleased himself in imagining that they had been borne by retainers of his family in the Commonwealth wars, in which, as he knew well, his ancestors had taken a loyal and distinguished part. Within the altar-rails was the effigy of the Esmond of the time of King James the First, the common forefather of all the group assembled in the family-pew. Madame de Bernstein, in her quality of Bishop's widow, never failed in attendance, and conducted her devotions with a gravity almost as exemplary as that of the ancestor yonder, in his square beard and red gown, for ever kneeling on his stone hassock before his great marble desk and book, under his emblazoned shield of arms. The clergyman, a tall, high-coloured, handsome young man, read the service in a lively, agreeable voice, giving almost a dramatic point to the chapters of Scripture which he read.

The music was good—one of the young ladies of the family touching the organ—and would have been better but for an interruption and something like a burst of laughter from the servants' pew, which was occasioned by Mr. Warrington's lacquey Gumbo, who, knowing the air given out for the psalm, began to sing it in a voice so exceedingly loud and sweet, that the whole congregation turned towards the African warbler; the parson himself put his handkerchief to his mouth, and the liveried gentlemen from London were astonished out of all propriety. Pleased, perhaps, with the sensation which he had created, Mr. Gumbo continued his performance until it became almost a solo, and the voice of the clerk himself was silenced. For the truth is, that though Gumbo held on to the book, along with pretty Molly, the porter's daughter, who had been the first to welcome the strangers to Castlewood, he sang and recited by ear and not by note, and could not read a syllable of the verses in the book before him.

This choral performance over, a brief sermon in due course followed, which, indeed, Harry thought a deal too short. In a lively, familiar, striking discourse the clergyman described a scene of which he had been witness the previous week—the execution of a horse-stealer after Assizes. He described the man and his previous good character, his family, the love they bore one another, and his agony at parting from them. He depicted the execution in a manner startling, terrible and picturesque. He did not introduce into his sermon the Scripture phraseology, such as Harry had been accustomed to hear from those somewhat Calvinistic preachers whom his mother loved to frequent, but rather spoke as one man of the world to other sinful people, who might be likely to profit by good advice. The unhappy man just gone, had begun as a farmer of good prospects; he had taken to drinking, card-playing, horse-racing, cock-fighting, the vices of the age; against which the young clergyman was generously indignant. Then he had got to poaching and to horse-stealing, for which he suffered. The divine rapidly drew striking and fearful pictures of these rustic crimes. He startled his hearers by showing that the Eye of the Law was watching the poacher at midnight, and setting traps to catch the criminal. He galloped the stolen horse over highway and common, and from one county into another, but showed Retribution ever galloping after, seizing the malefactor in the country fair, carrying him before the justice, and never unlocking his manacles till he dropped them at the gallows'-foot. Heaven be pitiful to the sinner! The clergyman acted the scene. He whispered in the criminal's ear at the cart. He dropped his handkerchief on the clerk's head. Harry started back as that handkerchief dropped. The clergyman had been talking for more than twenty minutes. Harry could have heard him for an hour more, and thought he had not been five minutes in the pulpit. The gentlefolks in the great pew were very much enlivened by the discourse. Once or twice, Harry, who could see the pew where the house servants sat, remarked these very attentive; and especially Gumbo, his own man, in an attitude of intense consternation. But the smock-frocks did not seem to heed, and clamped out of church quite unconcerned. Gaffer Brown and Gammer Jones took the matter as it came, and the rosy-cheeked, red-cloaked village lasses sat under their broad hats entirely unmoved. My lord, from his pew, nodded slightly to the clergyman in the pulpit, when that divine's head and wig surged up from the cushion.

"Sampson has been strong to-day," said his lordship. "He has assaulted the Philistines in great force."

"Beautiful, beautiful!" says Harry.

"Bet five to four it was his Assize sermon. He has been over to Winton to preach, and to see those dogs," cries William.

The organist had played the little congregation out into the sunshine. Only Sir Francis Esmond, temp. Jac. I., still knelt on his marble hassock, before his prayer-book of stone. Mr. Sampson came out of his vestry in his cassock, and nodded to the gentlemen still lingering in the great pew.

"Come up, and tell us about those dogs," says Mr. William, and the divine nodded a laughing assent.

The gentlemen passed out of the church into the gallery of their house, which connected them with that sacred building. Mr. Sampson made his way through the court, and presently joined them. He was presented by my lord to the Virginian cousin of the family, Mr. Warrington: the chaplain bowed very profoundly, and hoped Mr. Warrington would benefit by the virtuous example of his European kinsmen. Was he related to Sir Miles Warrington of Norfolk? Sir Miles was Mr. Warrington's father's elder brother. What a pity he had a son! 'Twas a pretty estate, and Mr. Warrington looked as if he would become a baronetcy, and a fine estate in Norfolk.

"Tell me about my uncle," cried Virginian Harry.

"Tell us about those dogs!" said English Will, in a breath.

"Two more jolly dogs, two more drunken dogs, saving your presence, Mr. Warrington, than Sir Miles and his son, I never saw. Sir Miles was a staunch friend and neighbour of Sir Robert's. He can drink down any man in the county, except his son and a few more. The other dogs about which Mr. William is anxious, for heaven hath made him a prey to dogs and all kinds of birds, like the Greeks in the Iliad—"

"I know that line in the Iliad," says Harry, blushing. "I only know five more, but I know that one." And his head fell. He was thinking, "Ah, my dear brother George knew all the Iliad and all the Odyssey, and almost every book that was ever written besides!"

"What on earth" (only he mentioned a place under the earth) "are you talking about now?" asked Will of his reverence.

The chaplain reverted to the dogs and their performance. He thought Mr. William's dogs were more than a match for them. From dogs they went off to horses. Mr. William was very eager about the Six Year Old Plate at Huntingdon. "Have you brought any news of it, Parson?"

"The odds are five to four on Brilliant against the field," says the Parson, gravely, "but, mind you, Jason is a good horse."

"Whose horse?" asks my lord.

"Duke of Ancaster's. By Cartouche out of Miss Langley," says the divine. "Have you horse-races in Virginia, Mr. Warrington?"

"Haven't we!" cries Harry; "but oh! I long to see a good English race!"

"Do you—do you—bet a little?" continues his reverence.

"I have done such a thing," replies Harry with a smile.

"I'll take Brilliant even against the field, for ponies with you, cousin!" shouts out Mr. William.

"I'll give or take three to one against Jason!" says the clergyman.

"I don't bet on horses I don't know," said Harry, wondering to hear the chaplain now, and remembering his sermon half an hour before.

"Hadn't you better write home, and ask your mother?" says Mr. William, with a sneer.

"Will, Will!" calls out my lord, "our cousin Warrington is free to bet, or not, as he likes. Have a care how you venture on either of them, Harry Warrington. Will is an old file, in spite of his smooth face, and as for Parson Sampson, I defy our ghostly enemy to get the better of him."

"Him and all his works, my lord!" said Mr. Sampson, with a bow.

Harry was highly indignant at this allusion to his mother. "I'll tell you what, Cousin Will," he said, "I am in the habit of managing my own affairs in my own way, without asking any lady to arrange them for me. And I'm used to make my own bets upon my own judgment, and don't need any relations to select them for me, thank you. But as I am your guest, and, no doubt, you want to show me hospitality, I'll take your bet—there. And so Done and Done."

"Done," says Will, looking askance.

"Of course it is the regular odds that's in the paper which you give me, cousin?"

"Well, no, it *isn't*," growled Will. "The odds are five to four, that's the fact, and you may have 'em, if you like."

"Nay, cousin, a bet is a bet; and I take you, too, Mr. Sampson."

"Three to one against Jason. I lay it. Very good," says Mr. Sampson.

"Is it to be ponies too, Mr. Chaplain?" asks Harry with a superb air, as if he had Lombard Street in his pocket.

"No, no. Thirty to ten. It is enough for a poor priest to win."

"Here goes a great slice out of my quarter's hundred," thinks Harry. "Well, I shan't let these Englishmen fancy that I am afraid of them. I didn't begin, but for the honour of Old Virginia I won't go back."

These pecuniary transactions arranged, William Esmond went away scowling towards the stables, where he loved to take his pipe with the grooms; the brisk parson went off to pay his court to the ladies, and partake of the Sunday dinner which would presently be served. Lord Castlewood and Harry remained for a while together. Since the Virginian's arrival my lord had scarcely spoken with him. In his manners he was perfectly friendly, but so silent that he would often sit at the head of his table, and leave it without uttering a word.

"I suppose yonder property of yours is a fine one by this time?" said my lord to Harry.

"I reckon it's almost as big as an English county," answered

Harry, "and the land's as good, too, for many things." Harry would not have the Old Dominion, nor his share in it, underrated.

"Indeed!" said my lord, with a look of surprise. "When it belonged to my father it did not yield much."

"Pardon me, my lord. You know *how* it belonged to your father," cried the youth with some spirit. "It was because my grandfather did not choose to claim his right."*

"Of course, of course," says my lord, hastily.

"I mean, cousin, that we of the Virginian house owe you nothing but our own," continued Harry Warrington; "but our own, and the hospitality which you are now showing me."

"You are heartily welcome to both. You were hurt by the betting just now?"

"Well," replied the lad, "I am sort o' hurt. Your welcome, you see, is different to our welcome, and that's the fact. At home we are glad to see a man, hold out a hand to him and give him of our best. Here you take us in, give us beef and claret enough, to be sure, and don't seem to care when we come, or when we go. That's the remark which I have been making since I have been in your lordship's house; I can't help telling it out, you see, now 'tis on my mind; and I think I am a little easier now I have said it." And with this the excited young fellow knocked a billiard-ball across the table, and then laughed, and looked at his elder kinsman.

"A la bonne heure! We are cold to the stranger within and without our gates. We don't take Mr. Harry Warrington into our arms, and cry when we see our cousin. We don't cry when he goes away—but do we pretend?"

"No, you don't. But you try to get the better of him in a bet," says Harry, indignantly.

"Is there no such practice in Virginia, and don't sporting men there try to overreach one another? What was that story I heard you telling our aunt, of the British officers and Tom Somebody of Spotsylvania?"

"That's fair!" cries Harry. "That is it's usual practice, and a stranger must look out. I don't mind the parson; if he wins, he may have, and welcome. But a relation! To think that my own blood cousin wants money out of me!"

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* This matter is discussed in the Author's previous work, "The Memoirs of Colonel Esmond."

"A Newmarket man would get the better of his father. My brother has been on the turf since he rode over to it from Cambridge. If you play at cards with him—and he will if you will let him—he will beat you if he can."

"Well, I'm ready," cries Harry. "I'll play any game with him that I know, or I'll jump with him, or I'll ride with him, or I'll row with him, or I'll wrestle with him, or I'll shoot with him—there now."

The senior was greatly entertained, and held out his hand to the boy. "Anything, but don't fight with him," said my lord.

"If I do, I'll whip him! hanged if I don't!" cried the lad. But a look of surprise and displeasure on the nobleman's part recalled him to better sentiments. "A hundred pardons, my lord!" he said, blushing very red, and seizing his cousin's hand. "I talked of ill manners, being angry and hurt just now; but 'tis doubly ill mannered of me to show my anger, and boast about my prowess to my own host and kinsman. It's not the practice with us Americans to boast, believe me, it's not."

"You are the first I ever met," says my lord, with a smile, "and I take you at your word. And I give you fair warning about the cards, and the betting, that is all, my boy."

"Leave a Virginian alone! We are a match for most men, we are," resumed the boy.

Lord Castlewood did not laugh. His eyebrows only arched for a moment, and his grey eyes turned towards the ground. "So you can bet fifty guineas and afford to lose them? So much the better for you, cousin. Those great Virginian estates yield a great revenue, do they?"

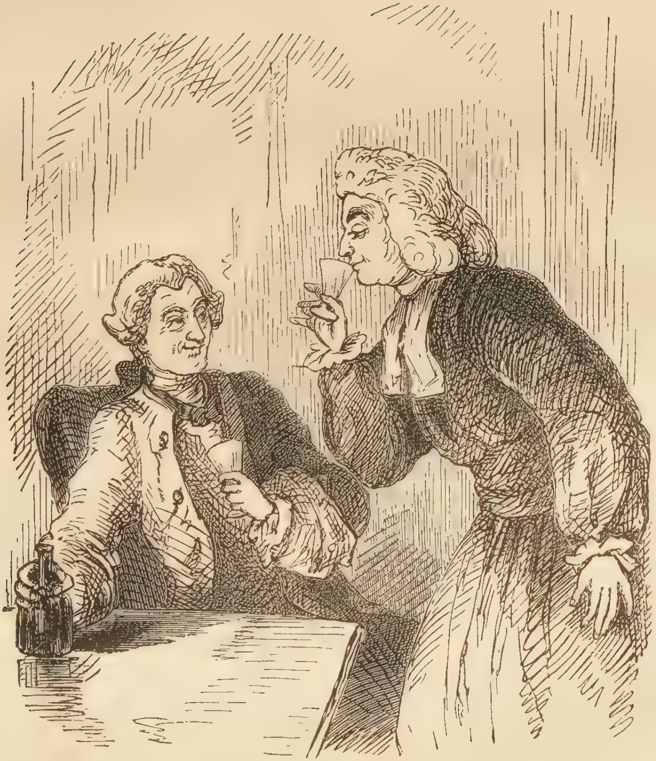
"More than sufficient for all of us—for ten times as many as we are now," replied Harry. ("What, *he* is pumping me," thought the lad.)

"And your mother makes her son and heir a handsome allowance?"

"As much as ever I choose to draw, my lord!" cried Harry.

"Peste! I wish I had such a mother!" cried my lord. "But I have only the advantage of a step-mother, and she draws on me. There is the dinner-bell. Shall we go into the eating-room?" And taking his young friend's arm, my lord led him to the apartment where that meal was waiting.

Parson Sampson formed the delight of the entertainment, and amused the ladies with a hundred agreeable stories. Besides being chaplain to his lordship, he was a preacher in London, at the new chapel in May Fair, for which my Lady Whittlesea (so well known in the reign of George I.) had left an endowment. He had the choicest stories of all the clubs and coteries—the very latest news of who had run away with whom—the last bon-mot of Mr. Selwyn—the last wild bet of March and Rockingham. He knew how the old king had quarrelled with Madame Walmoden, and the Duke was suspected of having a new love; who was in favour at Carlton House with the Princess of Wales; and who was hung last Monday, and how well he behaved in the cart. My lord's chaplain poured out all this intelligence to the amused ladies and the delighted young provincial,



seasoning his conversation with such plain terms and lively jokes as made Harry stare, who was newly arrived from the colonies, and unused to the elegancies of London life. The ladies, old and young, laughed quite cheerfully at the lively jokes. Do not be frightened, ye fair readers of the present day! We are not going to outrage your sweet modesties, or call blushes on your maiden cheeks. But 'tis certain that their ladyships at Castlewood never once thought of being shocked, but sat listening to the parson's funny tales until the chapel bell, clinking for afternoon service, summoned his reverence away for half-an-hour. There was no sermon. He would be back in the drinking of a bottle of Burgundy. Mr. Will called a fresh one, and the chaplain tossed off a glass ere he ran out.

Ere the half-hour was over, Mr. Chaplain was back again bawling for another bottle. This discussed, they joined the ladies, and a couple of card-tables were set out, as, indeed, they were for many hours every day, at which the whole of the family party engaged. Madame de Bernstein could beat any one of her kinsfolk at picquet, and there was only Mr. Chaplain in the whole circle who was at all a match for her ladyship.

In this easy manner the Sabbath day passed. The evening was beautiful, and there was talk of adjourning to a cool tankard and a game of whist in a summer-house; but the company voted to sit indoors, the ladies declaring they thought the aspect of three honours in their hand, and some good court cards, more beautiful than the loveliest scene of nature; and so the sun went behind the elms, and still they were at their cards; and the rooks came home cawing their even song, and they never stirred except to change partners; and the chapel clock tolled hour after hour unheeded, so delightfully were they spent over the pasteboard; and the moon and stars came out; and it was nine o'clock, and the groom of the chambers announced that supper was ready.

Whilst they sat at that meal, the postboy's twanging horn was heard, as he trotted into the village with his letter-bag. My lord's bag was brought in presently from the village, and his letters, which he put aside, and his newspaper which he read. He smiled as he came to a paragraph, looked at his Virginian cousin, and handed the paper over to his brother Will, who by this time was very comfortable, having had pretty good luck all the evening, and a great deal of liquor.

"Read that, Will," says my lord.

Mr. William took the paper, and, reading the sentence pointed out by his brother, uttered an exclamation which caused all the ladies to cry out.

"Gracious heavens, William! What has happened?" cries one or the other fond sister.

"Mercy, child, why do you swear so dreadfully?" asks the young man's fond mamma.

"What's the matter?" inquires Madame de Bernstein, who has fallen into a doze after her usual modicum of punch and beer.

"Read it, Parson!" says Mr. William, thrusting the paper over to the chaplain, and looking as fierce as a Turk.

"Bit, by the Lord!" roars the chaplain, dashing down the paper.

"Cousin Harry, you are in luck," said my lord, taking up the sheet, and reading from it. "The Six Year Old Plate at Huntingdon was won by Jason, beating Brilliant, Pytho, and Ginger. The odds were five to four on Brilliant against the field, three to one against Jason, seven to two against Pytho, and twenty to one against Ginger."

"I owe you a half-year's income of my poor living, Mr. Warrington," groaned the parson. "I will pay when my noble patron settles with me."

"A curse upon the luck!" growls Mr. William; "that comes of betting on a Sunday,"—and he sought consolation in another great bumper.

"Nay, Cousin Will. It was but in jest," cried Harry. "I can't think of taking my cousin's money."

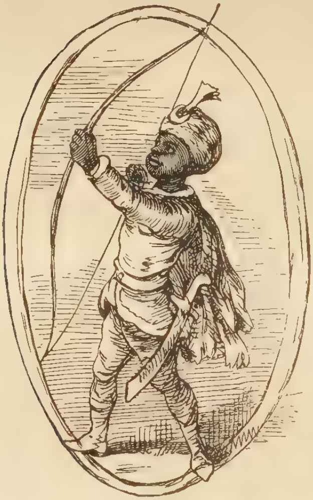
"Curse me, sir, do you suppose, if I lose, I can't pay?" asks Mr. William; "and that I want to be beholden to any man alive? That is a good joke. Isn't it, Parson?"

"I think I have heard better," said the clergyman; to which William replied, "Hang it, let us have another bowl."

Let us hope the ladies did not wait for this last replenishment of liquor, for it is certain they had had plenty already during the evening.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN WHICH GUMBO SHOWS SKILL WITH THE OLD ENGLISH WEAPON.



OUR young Virginian having won these sums of money from his cousin and the chaplain, was in duty bound to give them a chance of recovering their money, and I am afraid his mamma and other sound moralists would scarcely approve of his way of life. He played at cards a great deal too much. Besides the daily whist or quadrille with the ladies, which set in soon after dinner at three o'clock, and lasted until supper time, there occurred games involving the gain or loss of very considerable sums of money, in which all the gentlemen, my lord included, took part. Since their Sunday's conversation, his lordship was more free and confidential with his kinsman than he had previously been, betted with him quite affably, and engaged him at backgammon and picquet. Mr. William and the pious chaplain liked a little hazard; though this diversion was enjoyed on the sly, and unknown to the ladies of the house, who had exacted repeated promises from Cousin Will, that he would not lead the Virginian into mischief, and that he would himself keep out of it. So Will promised as much as his aunt or his mother chose to demand from him, gave them his word that he would never play—no, never; and when the family retired to rest, Mr. Will would walk over with a dice-box and a rum-bottle to Cousin Harry's quarters, where he, and Hal, and his reverence would sit and play until daylight.

When Harry gave to Lord Castlewood those flourishing descriptions of the maternal estate in America, he had not wished to mislead his kinsman, or to boast, or to tell falsehoods, for the lad was of a very honest and truth-telling nature; but, in his life at home, it must be owned that the young fellow had had acquaintance with all sorts of queer company,—horse-jockeys, tavern loungers, gambling and sporting men, of whom a great number were found in his native colony. A landed aristocracy, with a population of negroes to work their fields, and cultivate their tobacco and corn, had little other way of amusement than in the hunting-field, or over the cards and the punch-bowl. The hospitality of the province was unbounded: every man's house was his neighbour's; and the idle gentlefolks rode from one mansion to another, finding in each pretty much the same sport—welcome, and rough plenty. The Virginian Squire had often a bare-footed valet, and a cobbled saddle; but there was plenty of corn for the horses, and abundance of drink and venison for the master within the tumble-down fences, and behind the cracked windows of the hall. Harry had slept on many a straw mattress, and engaged in endless jolly night-bouts over claret and punch in cracked bowls till morning came, and it was time to follow the hounds. His poor brother was of a much more sober sort, as the lad owned with contrition. So it is that Nature makes folks; and some love books and tea, and some like Burgundy and a gallop across country. Our young fellow's tastes were speedily made visible to his friends in England. None of them were partial to the Puritan discipline; nor did they like Harry the worse for not being the least of a milksop. Manners, you see, were looser a hundred years ago; tongues were vastly more free and easy; names were named, and things were done, which we should screech now to hear mentioned. Yes, Madam, we are not as our ancestors were. Ought we not to thank the Fates that have improved our morals so prodigiously, and made us so eminently virtuous?

So, keeping a shrewd keen eye upon people round about him, and fancying, not incorrectly, that his cousins were disposed to pump him, Harry Warrington had thought fit to keep his own counsel regarding his own affairs, and in all games of chance or matters of sport was quite a match for the three gentlemen into whose company he had fallen. Even in the noble game of billiards he could hold his own after a few days' play with his cousins and their revered pastor. His grandfather loved the game, and had over from Europe one of the very few tables which existed in his Majesty's province of

Virginia. Nor though Mr. Will could beat him at the commencement, could he get undue odds out of the young gamester. After their first bet, Harry was on his guard with Mr. Will, and cousin William owned, not without respect, that the American was his match in most things, and his better in many. But though Harry played so well that he could beat the parson, and soon was the equal of Will, who of course could beat both the girls, how came it, that in the contests with these, especially with one of them, Mr. Warrington frequently came off second? He was profoundly courteous to every being who wore a petticoat: nor has that traditional politeness yet left his country. All the women of the Castlewood establishment loved the young gentleman. The grim housekeeper was mollified by him: the fat cook greeted him with blowsy smiles; the ladies'-maids, whether of the French or the English nation, smirked and giggled in his behalf; the pretty porter's daughter at the lodge had always a kind word in reply to his. Madame de Bernstein took note of all these things, and, though she said nothing, watched carefully the boy's disposition and behaviour.

Who can say how old Lady Maria Esmond was? Books of the Peerage were not so many in those days as they are in our blessed times, and I cannot tell to a few years, or even a lustre or two. When Will used to say she was five-and-thirty, he was abusive, and, besides, was always given to exaggeration. Maria was Will's half sister. She and my lord were children of the late Lord Castlewood's first wife, a German lady, whom, 'tis known, my lord married in the time of Queen Anne's wars. Baron Bernstein, who married Maria's Aunt Beatrix, Bishop Tusher's widow, was also a German, a Hanoverian nobleman, and relative of the first Lady Castlewood. If my Lady Maria was born under George I., and his Majesty George II. had been thirty years on the throne, how could she be seven-and twenty, as she told Harry Warrington she was? "I am old, child," she used to say. She used to call Harry "child" when they were alone. "I am a hundred years old. I am seven-and-twenty. I might be your mother almost." To which Harry would reply, "Your ladyship might be the mother of all the cupids, I am sure. You don't look twenty, on my word you do not!"

Lady Maria looked any age you liked. She was a fair beauty with a dazzling white and red complexion, an abundance of fair hair which flowed over her shoulders, and beautiful round arms which showed to uncommon advantage when she played at billiards with Cousin Harry. When she had to stretch across the table to make a stroke, that youth caught glimpses of a little ankle, a little clocked stocking, and a little black satin slipper with a little red heel, which filled him with unutterable rapture, and made him swear that there never was such a foot, ankle, clocked stocking, satin slipper in the world. And yet, O you foolish Harry! your mother's foot was ever so much more slender, and half an inch shorter, than Lady Maria's. But, somehow, boys do not look at their mammas' slippers and ankles with rapture.

No doubt Lady Maria was very kind to Harry when they were alone. Before her sister, aunt, stepmother, she made light of him, calling him a simpleton, a chit, and who knows what trivial names? Behind his back, and even before his face, she mimicked his accent, which smacked somewhat of his province. Harry blushed and corrected the faulty intonation, under his English monitresses. His aunt pronounced that they would soon make him a pretty fellow.

Lord Castlewood, we have said, became daily more familiar and friendly with his guest and relative. Till the crops were off the ground there was no sporting, except an occasional cock-match at Winchester, and a bull-baiting at Hexton Fair. Harry and Will rode off to many jolly fairs and races round about: the young Virginian was presented to some of the county families—the Henleys of the Grange, the Crawleys of Queen's Crawley, the Redmaynes of Lionsden, and so forth. The neighbours came in their great heavy coaches, and passed two or three days in country fashion. More of them would have come, but for the fear all the Castlewood family had of offending Madame de Bernstein. She did not like country company; the rustical society and conversation annoyed her. "We shall be merrier when my aunt leaves us," the young folks owned. "We have cause, as you may imagine, for being very civil to her. You know what a favourite she was with our papa? And with reason. She got him his earldom, being very well indeed at court at that time with the King and Queen. She commands here naturally, perhaps a little too much. We are all afraid of her: even my elder brother stands in awe of her, and my stepmother is much more obedient to her than she ever was to my papa, whom she ruled with a rod of iron. But Castlewood is merrier when our aunt is not here. At least we have much more company. You will come to us in our gay days, Harry, won't you? Of course you will: this is your home, sir. I was so pleased—oh, so pleased—when my brother said he considered it was your home!"

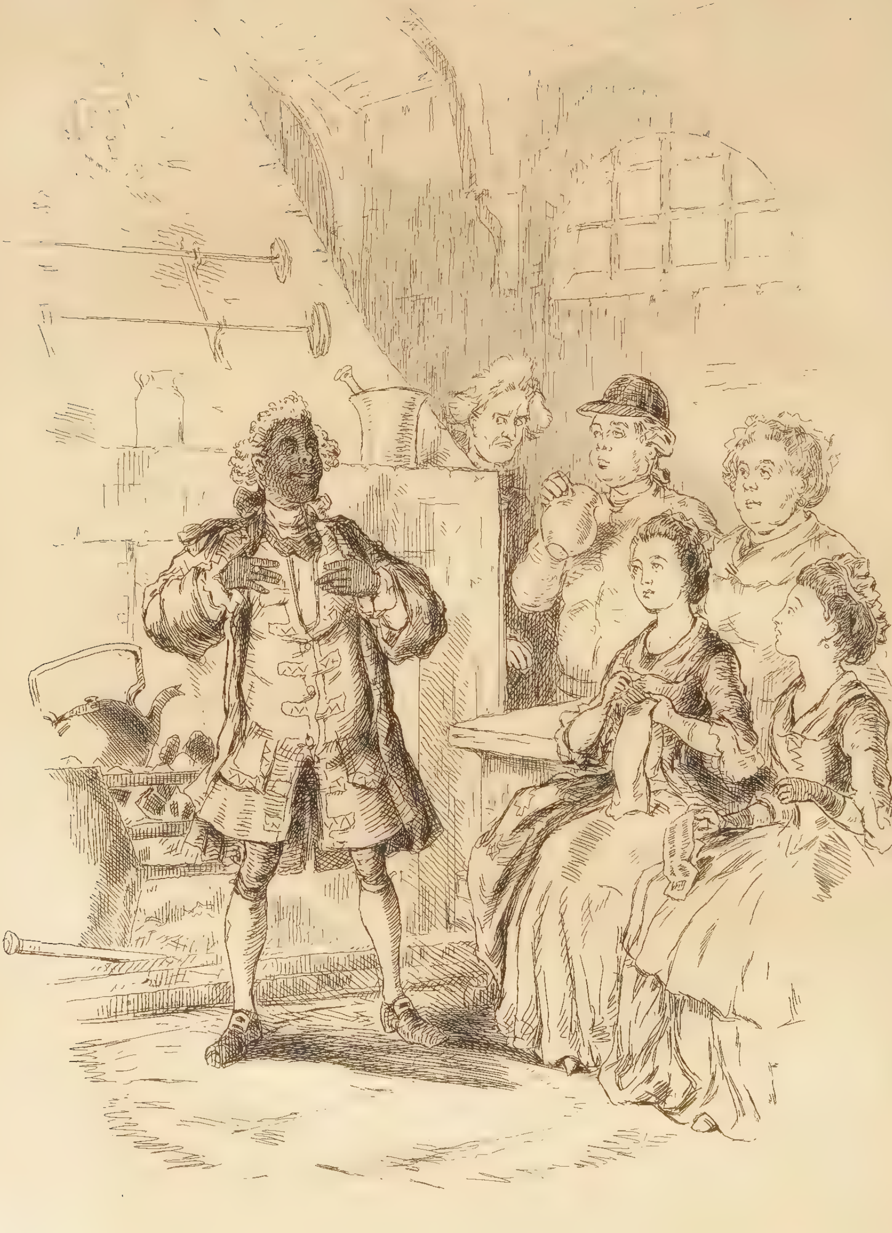
A soft hand is held out after this pretty speech, a pair of very well-preserved blue eyes look exceedingly friendly. Harry grasps his cousin's hand with ardour. I do not know what privilege of cousinship he would not like to claim, only he is so timid. They call the English selfish and cold. He at first thought his relatives were so: but how mistaken he was! How kind and affectionate they are, especially the Earl, and dear, dear Maria! How he wishes he could recall that letter which he had written to Mrs. Mountain and his mother, in which he hinted that his welcome had been a cold one! The Earl his cousin was everything that was kind, had promised to introduce him to London society, and present him at Court, and at White's. He was to consider Castlewood as his English home. He had been most hasty in his judgment regarding his relatives in Hampshire. All this, with many contrite expressions, he wrote in his second despatch to Virginia. And he added, for it hath been hinted that the young gentleman did not spell at this early time with especial accuracy, "My cousin, the Lady Maria, is a perfect *Angle*."

"*Ille præter omnes angulus ridet*," muttered little Mr. Dempster, at home in Virginia.

"The child can't be falling in love with his angle, as he calls her!" cries out Mountain.

"Pooh, pooh! my niece Maria is forty!" says Madam Esmond. "I perfectly well recollect her when I was at home—a great gawky carroty creature, with a foot like a pair of bellows." Where is truth, forsooth, and who knoweth it? Is Beauty beautiful, or is it only our eyes that make it so? Does Venus squint? Has she got a splay-foot, red hair, and a crooked back? Anoint my eyes, good Fairy Puck, so that I may ever consider the Beloved Object a paragon! Above all, keep on anointing my mistress's dainty peepers with the very strongest ointment, so that my noddle may ever appear lovely to her, and that she may continue to crown my honest ears with fresh roses!

Now, not only was Harry Warrington a favourite with some in the drawing-room, and all the ladies of the servants'-hall, but, like master like man, his valet Gumbo was very much admired and



GUMBO ASTONISHES THE SERVANTS' HALL.

respected by very many of the domestic circle. Gumbo had a hundred accomplishments. He was famous as a fisherman, huntsman, blacksmith. He could dress hair beautifully, and improved himself in the art under my lord's own Swiss gentleman. He was great at cooking many of his Virginian dishes, and learned many new culinary secrets from my lord's French man. We have heard how exquisitely and melodiously he sang at church; and he sang not only sacred but secular music, often inventing airs and composing rude words after the habit of his people. He played the fiddle so charmingly, that he set all the girls dancing in Castlewood hall, and was ever welcome to a gratis mug of ale at the "Three Castles" in the village, if he would but bring his fiddle with him. He was good-natured and loved to play for the village children: so that Mr. Warrington's negro was a universal favourite in all the Castlewood domain.

Now it was not difficult for the servants'-hall folks to perceive that Mr. Gumbo was a liar, which fact was undoubted in spite of all his good qualities. For instance, that day at church, when he pretended to read out of Molly's psalm-book, he sang quite other words than those which were down in the book, of which he could not decipher a syllable. And he pretended to understand music, whereupon the Swiss valet brought him some, and Master Gumbo turned the page upside down. These instances of long-bow practice daily occurred, and were patent to all the Castlewood household. They knew Gumbo was a liar, perhaps not thinking the worse of him for this weakness; but they did not know how great a liar he was, and believed him much more than they had any reason for doing, and because, I suppose, they liked to believe him.

Whatever might be his feelings of wonder and envy on first viewing the splendour and comforts of Castlewood, Mr. Gumbo kept his sentiments to himself and examined the place, park, appointments, stables, very coolly. The horses, he said, were very well, what there were of them; but at Castlewood in Virginia they had six times as many, and let me see, fourteen eighteen grooms to look after them. Madam Esmond's carriages were much finer than my lord's, —great deal more gold on the panels. As for her gardens, they covered acres, and they grew every kind of flower and fruit under the sun. Pine-apples and peaches? Pine-apples and peaches were so common, they were given to pigs in his country. They had twenty forty gardeners, not white gardeners, all black gentlemen, like hisself. In the house were twenty forty gentlemen in livery, besides women-servants,—never could remember how many women-servants,—dere were so many: tink dere were fifty women-servants,—all Madam Esmond's property, and worth ever so many hundred pieces of eight apiece. How much was a piece of eight? Bigger than a guinea, a piece of eight was. Tink, Madam Esmond have twenty thirty thousand guineas a year,—have whole rooms full of gold and plate. Come to England in one of her ships; have ever so many ships, Gumbo can't count how many ships; and estates, covered all over with tobacco and negroes, and reaching out for a week's journey. Was Master Harry heir to all this property? Of course, now Master George was killed and scalped by the Indians. Gumbo had killed ever so many Indians, and tried to save Master George, but he was Master Harry's boy,—and Master Harry was as rich,—oh, as rich as ever he like. He wore black now, because Master George was dead; but you should see his chests full of gold clothes, and lace, and jewels at Bristol. Of course, Master Harry was the richest man in all Virginia, and might have twenty sixty servants; only he liked travelling with one best, and that one, it need scarcely be said, was Gumbo.

This story was not invented at once, but gradually elicited from Mr. Gumbo, who might have uttered some trifling contradictions during the progress of the narrative, but by the time he had told his tale twice or thrice in the servants'-hall or the butler's private apartment, he was pretty perfect and consistent in his part, and knew accurately the number of slaves Madam Esmond kept, and the amount of income which she enjoyed. The truth is, that as four or five blacks are required to do the work of one white man, the domestics in American establishments are much more numerous than in ours; and, like the houses of most other Virginian landed proprietors, Madam Esmond's mansion and stables swarmed with negroes.

Mr. Gumbo's account of his mistress's wealth and splendour was carried to my lord by his lordship's man, and to Madame de Bernstein and my ladies by their respective waiting-women, and, we may be sure, lost nothing in the telling. A young gentleman in England is not the less liked because he is reputed to be the heir to vast wealth and possessions; when Lady Castlewood came to hear of Harry's prodigious expectations, she repented of her first cool reception of him, and of having pinched her daughter's arm till it was black and blue for having been extended towards the youth in too friendly a manner. Was it too late to have him back into those fair arms? Lady Fanny was welcome to try, and resumed the dancing-lessons. The Countess would play the music with all her heart. But, how provoking! that odious, sentimental Maria would always insist upon being in the room; and, as sure as Fanny walked in the gardens or the park, so sure would her sister come trailing after her. As for Madame de Bernstein, she laughed, and was amused at the stories of the prodigious fortune of her Virginian relatives. She knew her half-sister's man of business in London, and very likely was aware of the real state of Madam Esmond's money matters; but she did not contradict the rumours which Gumbo and his fellow-servants had set afloat; and was not a little diverted by the effect which these reports had upon the behaviour of the Castlewood family towards their young kinsman.

"Hang him! Is he so rich, Molly?" said my lord to his elder sister. "Then good-by to our chances with your aunt. The Baroness will be sure to leave him all her money to spite us, and because he doesn't want it. Nevertheless, the lad is a good lad enough, and it is not his fault, being rich, you know."

"He is very simple and modest in his habits for one so wealthy," remarks Maria.

"Rich people often are so," says my lord. "If I were rich, I often think I would be the greatest miser, and live in rags and on a crust. Depend on it there is no pleasure so enduring as money-getting. It grows on you, and increases with old age. But because I am as poor as Lazarus, I dress in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day."

Maria went to the book-room and got the "History of Virginia, by R. B. Gent"—and read therein what an admirable climate it was, and how all kinds of fruit and corn grew in that province, and what noble rivers were those of Potomac and Rappahannoc, abounding in all sorts of fish. And she wondered whether the climate would agree with her, and whether her aunt would like her? And Harry was sure his mother would adore her, so would Mountain. And when he was asked about the number of his mother's servants, he said, they certainly had more servants than are seen in England—he did not know how many. But the negroes did not do near as much work as English servants did: hence the necessity of keeping so great a number. As for some others of Gumbo's details which were brought to him, he laughed and said the boy was wonderful as a romancer, and in telling such stories he supposed was trying to speak out for the honour of the family.

So Harry was modest as well as rich! His denials only served to confirm his relatives' opinion regarding his splendid expectations. More and more the Countess and the ladies were friendly and affectionate with him. More and more Mr. Will betted with him, and wanted to sell him bargains. Harry's simple dress and equipage only served to confirm his friends' idea of his wealth. To see a young man of his rank and means with but one servant, and without horses or a carriage of his own—what modesty! When he went to London he would cut a better figure? Of course he would. Castlewood would introduce him to the best society in the capital, and he would appear as he ought to appear at St. James's. No man could be more pleasant, wicked, lively, obsequious than the worthy chaplain, Mr. Sampson. How proud he would be if he could show his young friend a little of London life!—if he could warn rogues off him, and keep him out of the way of harm! Mr. Sampson was very kind: everybody was very kind. Harry liked quite well the respect that was paid to him. As Madam Esmond's son he thought perhaps it was his due: and took for granted that he was the personage which his family imagined him to be. How should he know better, who had never as yet seen any place but his own province, and why should he not respect his own condition when other people respected it so? So all the little knot of people at Castlewood House, and from these the people in Castlewood village, and from thence the people in the whole county, chose to imagine that Mr. Harry Esmond Warrington was the heir of immense wealth, and a gentleman of very great importance, because his negro valet told lies about him in the servants'-hall.

Harry's aunt, Madame de Bernstein, after a week or two, began to tire of Castlewood and the inhabitants of that mansion, and the neighbours who came to visit them. This clever woman tired of most things and people sooner or later. So she took to nodding and sleeping over the chaplain's stories, and to doze at her whist and over her dinner, and to be very snappish and sarcastic in her conversation with her Esmond nephews and nieces, hitting out blows at my lord and his brother the jockey, and my ladies, widowed and unmarried, who winced under her scornful remarks, and bore them as they best might. The cook, whom she had so praised on first coming, now gave her no satisfaction; the wine was corked; the house was damp, dreary, and full of draughts; the doors would not shut, and the chimneys were smoky. She began to think the Tunbridge waters were very necessary for her, and ordered the doctor, who came to her from the neighbouring town of Hexton, to order those waters for her benefit.

"I wish to heaven she would go!" growled my lord, who was the most independent member of his family. "She may go to Tunbridge, or she may go to Bath, or she may go to Jericho for me."

"Shall Fanny and I come with you to Tunbridge, dear Baroness?" asked Lady Castlewood of her sister-in-law.

"Not for worlds, my dear! The doctor orders me absolute quiet, and if you came I should have the knocker going all day, and Fanny's lovers would never be out of the house," answered the Baroness, who was quite weary of Lady Castlewood's company.

"I wish I could be of any service to my aunt!" said the sentimental Lady Maria, demurely.

"My good child, what can you do for me? You cannot play picquet so well as my maid, and I have heard all your songs till I am perfectly tired of them! One of the gentlemen might go with me: at least make the journey, and see me safe from highwaymen."

"I'm sure, Ma'am, I shall be glad to ride with you," said Mr. Will.

"Oh, not you! I don't want *you*, William," cried the young man's aunt. "Why do not *you* offer, and where are your American manners, you ungracious Harry Warrington? Don't swear, Will. Harry is much better company than you are, and much better *ton* too, sir."

"Tong, indeed! Confound his tong," growled envious Will to himself.

"I dare say I shall be tired of him, as I am of other folks," continued the Baroness. "I have scarcely seen Harry at all in these last days. You shall ride with me to Tunbridge, Harry!"

At this direct appeal, and to no one's wonder more than that of his aunt, Mr. Harry Warrington blushed, and hemmed and ha'd: and at length said, "I have promised my cousin Castlewood to go over to Hexton Petty Sessions with him to-morrow. He thinks I should see how the Courts here are conducted—and—the partridge shooting will soon begin, and I have promised to be here for that, Ma'am." Saying which words, Harry Warrington looked as red as a poppy, whilst Lady Maria held her meek face downwards, and nimbly plied her needle.

"You actually refuse to go with me to Tunbridge Wells?" called out Madame Bernstein, her eyes lightning, and her face flushing up with anger, too.

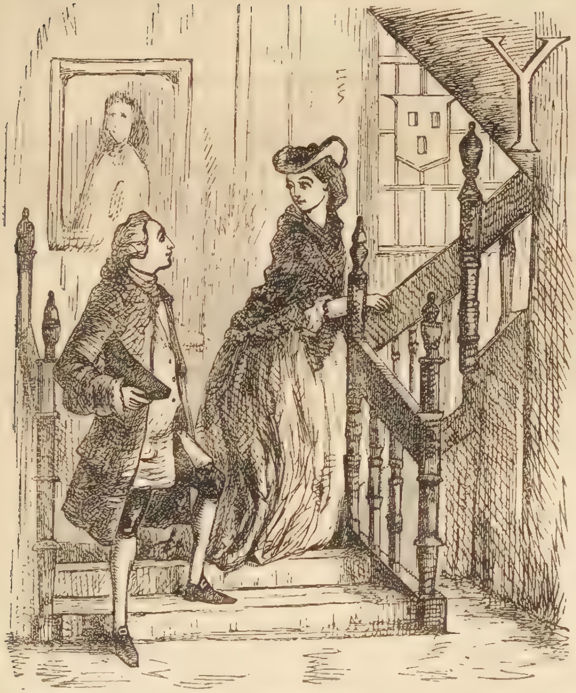
"Not to ride with you, Ma'am; that I will do with all my heart; but to stay there—I have promised. . . ."

"Enough, enough, sir! I can go alone, and don't want your escort," cried the irate old lady, and rustled out of the room.

The Castlewood family looked at each other with wonder. Will whistled. Lady Castlewood glanced at Fanny, as much as to say, *His* chance is over. Lady Maria never lifted up her eyes from her tambour-frame.

CHAPTER XVII.

ON THE SCENT.



YOUNG Harry Warrington's act of revolt came so suddenly upon Madame de Bernstein, that she had no other way of replying to it, than by the prompt outbreak of anger with which we left her in the last chapter. She darted two fierce glances at Lady Fanny and her mother as she quitted the room. Lady Maria over her tambour-frame escaped without the least notice, and scarcely lifted up her head from her embroidery, to watch the aunt retreating, or the looks which mamma-in-law and sister threw at one another.

"So, in spite of all, you *have*, Madam?" the maternal looks seemed to say.

"Have what?" asked Lady Fanny's eyes. But what good in looking innocent? She looked puzzled. She did not look one-tenth part as innocent as Maria. Had she been guilty, she would have looked not guilty much more cleverly; and would have taken care to study and compose a face so as to be ready to suit the plea. Whatever was the expression of Fanny's eyes, mamma glared on her as if she would have liked to tear them out.

But Lady Castlewood could not operate upon the said eyes then and there, like the barbarous monsters in the stage-direction in King Lear. When her ladyship was going to tear out her daughter's eyes, she would retire smiling, with an arm round her dear child's waist, and then gouge her in private.

"So you don't fancy going with the old lady to Tunbridge Wells?" was all she said to Cousin Warrington, wearing at the same time a perfectly well-bred simper on her face.

"And small blame to our cousin!" interposed my lord. (The face over the tambour-frame looked up for one instant.) "A young fellow must not have it all idling and holiday. Let him mix up something useful with his pleasures, and go to the fiddles and pump-rooms at Tunbridge or the Bath later. Mr. Warrington has to conduct a great estate in America: let him see how ours in England are carried on. Will hath shown him the kennel and the stables; and the games in vogue, which I think, cousin, you seem to play as well as your teachers. After harvest we will show him a little English fowling and shooting: in winter we will take him out a-hunting. Though there has been a coolness between us and our aunt-kinswoman in Virginia, yet we are of the same blood. Ere we send our cousin back to his mother, let us show him what an English gentleman's life at home is. I should like to read with him as well as sport with him, and that is why I have been pressing him of late to stay and bear me company."

My lord spoke with such perfect frankness that his mother-in-law and half-brother and sister could not help wondering what his meaning could be. The three last-named persons often held little conspiracies together, and caballed or grumbled against the head of the house. When he adopted that frank tone, there was no fathoming his meaning; often it would not be discovered until months had passed. He did not say, "This is true," but, "I mean that this statement should be accepted and believed in my family." It was then a thing *convenue*, that my Lord Castlewood had a laudable desire to cultivate the domestic affections, and to educate, amuse, and improve his young relative; and that he had taken a great fancy to the lad, and wished that Harry should stay for some time near his lordship.

"What is Castlewood's game now?" asked William of his mother and sister as they disappeared into the corridors. "Stop! By George, I have it!"

"What, William?"

"He intends to get him to play, and to win the Virginia estate back from him. That's what it is!"

"But the lad has not got the Virginia estate to pay, if he loses," remarks mamma.

"If my brother has not some scheme in view, may I be——."

"Hush! Of course he has a scheme in view. But what is it?"

"He can't mean Maria—Maria is as old as Harry's mother," muses Mr. William.

"Pooh! with her old face and sandy hair and freckled skin! Impossible!" cries Lady Fanny, with somewhat of a sigh.

"Of course, your ladyship had a fancy for the Iroquois, too!" cried mamma.

"I trust I know my station and duty better, Madam! If I had liked him, that is no reason why I should marry him. Your ladyship hath taught me as much as that."

"My Lady Fanny!"

"I am sure you married our papa without liking him. You have told me so a thousand times!"

"And if you did not love our father before marriage, you certainly did not fall in love with him afterwards," broke in Mr. William, with a laugh. "Fan and I remember how our honoured parents used to fight. Don't us, Fan? And our brother Esmond kept the peace."

"Don't recall those dreadful low scenes, William!" cries mamma. "When your father took too much drink, he was like a madman; and his conduct should be a warning to you, sir, who are fond of the same horrid practice."

"I am sure, Madam, *you* were not much the happier for marrying the man you did not like, and your ladyship's title hath brought very little along with it," whimpered out Lady Fanny. "What is the use of a coronet with the jointure of a tradesman's wife?—how many of them are richer than we are? There is come lately to live in our Square, at Kensington, a grocer's widow from London Bridge, whose daughters have three gowns where I have one; and who, though they are waited on but by a man and a couple of maids, I know eat and drink a thousand times better than we do, with our scraps of cold meat on our plate, and our great flaunting, trapesing, impudent, lazy lacqueys!"

"He! he! glad I dine at the palace, and not at home!" said Mr. Will. (Mr. Will, through his aunt's interest with Count Puffendorff, Groom of the Royal (and Serene Electoral) Powder-Closet, had one of the many small places at Court, that of Deputy Powder.)

"Why should I not be happy without any title except my own?" continued Lady Frances. "Many people are. I dare say they are even happy in America."

"Yes! with a mother-in-law who is a perfect Turk and Tartar, for all I hear—with Indian war-whoops howling all around you: and with a danger of losing your scalp, or of being eat up by a wild beast every time you went to church."

"I wouldn't go to church," said Lady Fanny.

"You'd go with anybody who asked you, Fan!" roared out Mr. Will: "and so would old Maria, and so would any woman, that's the fact." And Will laughed at his own wit.

"Pray, good folks, what is all your merriment about?" here asked Madame Bernstein, peeping in on her relatives from the tapestried door which led into the gallery where their conversation was held.

Will told her that his mother and sister had been having a fight (which was not a novelty, as Madame Bernstein knew), because Fanny wanted to marry their cousin, the wild Indian, and my lady countess would not let her. Fanny protested against this statement. Since the very first day when her mother had told her not to speak to the young gentleman, she had scarcely exchanged two words with him. She knew her station better. *She* did not want to be scalped by wild Indians, or eat up by bears.

Madame de Bernstein looked puzzled. "If he is not staying for you, for whom is he staying?" she asked. "At the houses to which he has been carried, you have taken care not to show him a woman that is not a fright or in the nursery; and I think the boy is too proud to fall in love with a dairymaid, Will."

"Humph! That is a matter of taste, ma'am," says Mr. William, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"Of Mr. William Esmond's taste, as you say; but not of yonder boy's. The Esmonds of his grandfather's nurture, sir, would not go a-courting in the kitchen."

"Well, ma'am, every man to his taste, I say again. A fellow might go farther and fare worse than my brother's servants'-hall, and besides Fan, there's only the maids or old Maria to choose from."

"Maria! Impossible!" And yet, as she spoke the very words, a sudden thought crossed Madame Bernstein's mind, that this elderly Calypso might have captivated her young Telemachus. She called to mind half-a-dozen instances in her own experience of young men who had been infatuated by old women. She remembered how frequent Harry Warrington's absences had been of late—absences which she attributed to his love for field-sports. She remembered how often, when he was absent, Maria Esmond was away too. Walks in cool avenues, whisperings in garden temples, or behind clipt hedges, casual squeezes of the hand in twilight corridors, or sweet glances and ogles in meetings on the stairs,—a lively fancy, an intimate knowledge of the world, very likely a considerable personal experience in early days, suggested all these possibilities and chances to Madame de Bernstein, just as she was saying that they were impossible.

"Impossible, ma'am! I don't know," Will continued. "My mother warned Fan off him."

"Oh, your mother *did* warn Fanny off?"

"Certainly, my dear Baroness!"

"Didn't she? Didn't she pinch Fanny's arm black and blue? Didn't they fight about it?"

"Nonsense, William! For shame, William!" cry both the implicated ladies in a breath.

"And now, since we have heard how rich he is, perhaps it is sour grapes, that is all. And now, since he is warned off the young bird, perhaps he is hunting the old one, that's all. Impossible! why impossible? You know old Lady Suffolk, ma'am?"

"William, how can you speak about Lady Suffolk to your aunt?"

A grin passed over the countenance of the young gentleman. "Because Lady Suffolk was a special favourite at Court? Well, other folks have succeeded her."

"Sir!" cries Madame de Bernstein, who may have had her reasons to take offence.

"So they have, I say; or who, pray, is my Lady Yarmouth now! And didn't old Lady Suffolk go and fall in love with George Berkeley, and marry him when she was ever so old? Nay, ma'am, if I remember right—and we hear a deal of town-talk at our table—Harry Estridge went mad about your ladyship when you were somewhat rising twenty; and would have changed your name a third time if you would but have let him."

This allusion to an adventure of her own later days, which was, indeed, pretty notorious to all the world, did not anger Madame de Bernstein, like Will's former hint about his aunt having been a favourite at George the Second's Court; but, on the contrary, set her in good humour.

"*Au fait*," she said, musing, as she played a pretty little hand on the table, and no doubt thinking about mad young Harry Estridge; "'tis not impossible, William, that old folks and young folks, too, should play the fool."

"But I can't understand a young fellow being in love with Maria," continued Mr. William, "however he might be with *you*, ma'am. That's *oter shose*, as our French tutor used to say. You remember the Count, ma'am; he, he!—and so does Maria!"

"William!"

"And I dare say the Count remembers the bastinado Castlewood had given to him. A confounded French dancing-master calling himself a count, and daring to fall in love in our family! Whenever I want to make myself uncommonly agreeable to old Maria, I just say a few words of *parly voo* to her. *She* knows what I mean."

"Have you abused her to your cousin, Harry Warrington?" asked Madame de Bernstein.

"Well—I know she is always abusing me—and I *have* said my mind about her," said Will.

"O you idiot!" cried the old lady. "Who but a gaby ever spoke ill of a woman to her sweetheart? He will tell her everything, and they both will hate you."

"The very thing, ma'am!" cried Will, bursting into a great laugh. "I had a sort of suspicion, you see, and two days ago, as we were riding together, I told Harry Warrington a bit of my mind about Maria;—why shouldn't I, I say? She is always abusing me, ain't she, Fan? And your favourite turned as red as my plush waistcoat—wondered how a gentleman could malign his own flesh and blood, and, trembling all over with rage, said I was no true Esmond."

"Why didn't you chastise him, sir, as my lord did the dancing-master?" cried Lady Castlewood.

"Well, mother,—you see that at quarter-staff there's two sticks used," replied Mr. William; "and my opinion is, that Harry Warrington can guard his own head uncommonly well. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why I did not offer to treat my cousin to a caning. And now you say so, ma'am, I know he has told Maria. She has been looking battle, murder, and sudden death at me ever since. All which shows——" and here he turned to his aunt.

"All which shows what?"

"That I think we are on the right scent; and that we've found Maria—the old fox!" And the ingenuous youth here clapped his hand to his mouth, and gave a loud halloo.

How far had this pretty intrigue gone? now was the question. Mr. Will said, that at her age, Maria would be for conducting matters as rapidly as possible, not having much time to lose. There was not a great deal of love lost between Will and his half-sister.

Who would sift the matter to the bottom? Scolding one party or the other was of no avail. Threats only serve to aggravate people in such cases. "I never was in danger but once, young people," said Madame de Bernstein, "and I think that was because my poor mother contradicted me. If this boy is like others of his family, the more we oppose him, the more *entêté* he will be; and we shall never get him out of his scrape."

"Faith, ma'am, suppose we leave him in it?" grumbled Will. "Old Maria and I don't love each other too much, I grant you; but an English earl's daughter is good enough for an American tobacco-planter, when all is said and done."

Here his mother and sister broke out. They would not hear of such a union. To which Will answered, "You are like the dog in the manger. You don't wan't the man yourself, Fanny——"

"*I* want him, indeed!" cries Lady Fanny, with a toss of her head.

"Then why grudge him to Maria? I think Castlewood wants her to have him."

"Why grudge him to Maria, sir?" cried Madame de Bernstein, with great energy. "Do you remember who the poor boy is, and what your house owes to his family? His grandfather was the best friend your father ever had, and gave up this estate, this title, this very castle, in which you are conspiring against the friendless Virginian lad, that you and yours might profit by it. And the reward for all this kindness is, that you all but shut the door on the child when he knocks at it, and talk of marrying him to a silly elderly creature, who might be his mother! He *shan't* marry her."

"The very thing we were saying and thinking, my dear Baroness!" interposes Lady Castlewood. "*Our* part of the family is not eager about the match, though my lord and Maria may be."

"You will like him for yourself, now that you hear he is rich—and may be richer, young people, mind you that," cried Madam Beatrix, turning upon the other women.

"Mr. Warrington may be ever so rich, madam, but there is no need why your ladyship should perpetually remind us that we are poor," broke in Lady Castlewood, with some spirit. "At least there is very little disparity in Fanny's age and Mr. Harry's; and you surely will be the last to say that a lady of our name and family is not good enough for any gentleman born in Virginia or elsewhere."

"Let Fanny take an English gentleman, countess, not an American. With such a name and such a mother to help her, and with all her good looks and accomplishments, sure she can't fail of finding a man worthy of her. But from what I know about the daughters of this house, and what I imagine about our young cousin, I am certain that no happy match could be made between them."

"*What* does my aunt know about me?" asked Lady Fanny, turning very red.

"Only your temper, my dear. You don't suppose that I believe all the tittle-tattle and scandal which one cannot help hearing in town? But the temper and early education are sufficient. Only fancy one of you condemned to leave St. James's and the Mall, and live in a plantation surrounded by savages! You would die of ennui, or worry your husband's life out with your ill humour. You are born, ladies, to ornament courts—not wigwams. Let this lad go back to his wilderness with a wife who is suited to him."

The other two ladies declared in a breath that, for their parts, they desired no better, and, after a few more words, went on their way, while Madame de Bernstein, lifting up her tapestried door, retired into her own chamber. She saw all the scheme now; she admired the ways of women, calling a score of little circumstances back to mind. She wondered at her own blindness during the last few days, and that she should not have perceived the rise and progress of this queer little intrigue. How far had it gone? was now the question. Was Harry's passion of the serious and tragical sort, or a mere fire of straw which a day or two would burn out? How deeply was he committed? She dreaded the strength of Harry's passion, and the weakness of Maria's. A woman of her age is so desperate, Madame Bernstein may have thought, that she will make any efforts to secure a lover. Scandal, bah! She will retire and be a princess in Virginia, and leave the folks in England to talk as much scandal as they choose.

Is there always, then, one thing which women do not tell to one another, and about which they agree to deceive each other? Does the concealment arise from deceit or modesty? A man, as soon as he feels an inclination for one of the other sex, seeks for a friend of his own to whom he may impart the delightful intelligence. A woman (with more or less skill) buries her secret away from her kind. For days and weeks past, had not this old Maria made fools of the whole house,—Maria, the butt of the family?

I forbear to go into too curious inquiries regarding the Lady Maria's antecedents. I have my own opinion about Madame Bernstein's. A hundred years ago people of the great world were not so strait-laced as they are now, when everybody is good, pure, moral, modest; when there is no skeleton in anybody's closet; when there is no scheming; no slurring over of old stories; when no girl tries to sell herself for wealth, and no mother abets her. Suppose my Lady Maria tries to make her little game, wherein is her ladyship's great eccentricity?

On these points no doubt the Baroness de Bernstein thought, as she communed with herself in her private apartment.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN OLD STORY.

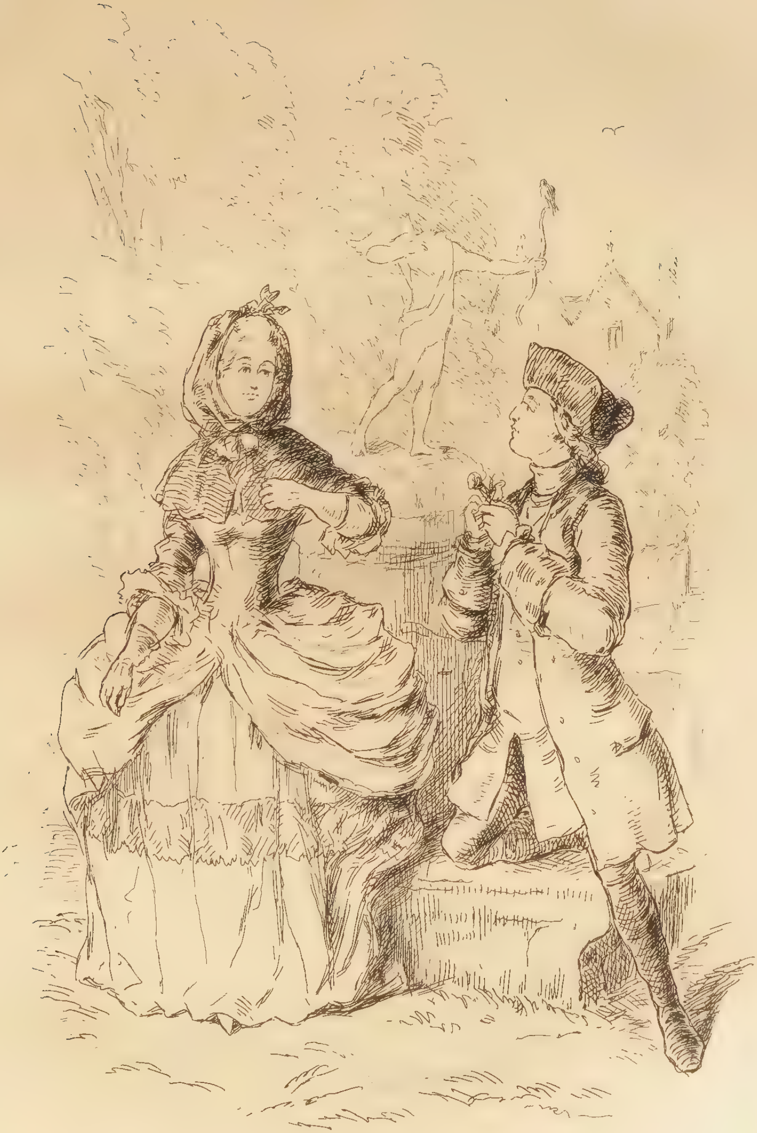
S my Lady Castlewood and her son and daughter passed through one door of the saloon where they had all been seated, my lord Castlewood departed by another issue; and then the demure eyes looked up from the tambour-frame on which they had persisted hitherto in examining the innocent violets and jonquils. The eyes looked up at Harry Warrington, who stood at an ancestral portrait under the great fire-place. He had gathered a great heap of blushes (those flowers which bloom so rarely after gentlefolks' spring-time), and with them ornamented his honest countenance, his cheeks, his forehead, nay, his youthful ears.

"Why did you refuse to go with our aunt, cousin?" asked the lady of the tambour-frame.

"Because your ladyship bade me stay," answered the lad.

"*I* bid you stay! La! child! What one says in fun, you take in earnest! Are all you Virginian gentlemen so obsequious as to fancy every idle word a lady says is a command? Virginia must be a pleasant country for our sex if it be so!"

"You said—when—when we walked in the terrace two nights since,—Oh heaven!" cried Harry, with a voice trembling with emotion.



GATHER YE ROSEBUDS WHILE YE MAY.

"Ah, that sweet night, cousin!" cries the Tambour-frame.

"Whe—whe—when you gave me this rose from your own neck"—roared out Harry, pulling suddenly a crumpled and decayed vegetable from his waistcoat—"which I will never part with—with, no, by heavens, whilst this heart continues to beat! You said, 'Harry, if your aunt asks you to go away, you will go, and if you go, you will forget me.'—*Didn't* you say so?"

"All men forget!" said the Virgin, with a sigh.

"In this cold selfish country they may, cousin, not in ours," continues Harry, yet in the same state of exaltation—"I had rather have lost an arm almost than refused the old lady. I tell you it went to my heart to say no to her, and she so kind to me, and who had been the means of introducing me to—to—oh, heaven!" . . . (Here a kick to an intervening spaniel, which flies yelping from before the fire, and a rapid advance on the tambour-frame.) "Look here, cousin! If you were to bid me jump out of yonder window, I should do it; or murder, I should do it."

"La! but you need not squeeze one's hand so, you silly child!" remarks Maria.

"I can't help it—we are so in the south. Where my heart is, I can't help speaking my mind out, cousin—and *you* know where that heart is! Ever since that evening—that—Oh heaven! I tell you I have hardly slept since—I want to do something—to distingush myself—to be ever so great. I wish there was Giants, Maria, as I have read of in—in books, that I could go and fight 'em. I wish you was in distress, that I might help you, somehow. I wish you wanted my blood, that I might spend every drop of it for you. And when you told me not to go with Madam Bernstein . . ."

"*I* tell thee, child? never."

"I thought you told me. You said you knew I preferred my aunt to my cousin, and I said then what I say now, 'Incomparable Maria! I prefer thee to all the women in the world and all the angels in Paradise—and I would go anywhere, were it to dungeons, if you ordered me!' And do you think I would not stay anywhere, when you only desired that I should be near you?" he added, after a moment's pause.

"Men always talk in that way—that is,—that is, I have heard so," said the spinster, correcting herself; "for what should a country-bred woman know about you creatures? When you are near us, they say you are all raptures and flames and promises and I don't know what; when you are away, you forget all about us."

"But I think I never want to go away as long as I live," groaned out the young man. "I have tired of many things; not books and that, I never cared for study much, but games and sports which I used to be fond of when I was a boy. Before I saw you, it was to be a soldier I most desired; I tore my hair with rage when my poor dear brother went away instead of me on that expedition in which we lost him. But now, I only care for one thing in the world, and you know what that is."

"You silly child! don't you know I am almost old enough to be . . . . ?"

"I know—I know! but what is that to me? Hasn't your br . . . —well, never mind who, some of 'em—told me stories against you, and didn't they show me the Family Bible, where all your names are down, and the dates of your birth?"

"The cowards! Who did that?" cried out Lady Maria. "Dear Harry, tell me who did that? Was it my mother-in-law, the grasping, odious, abandoned, brazen harpy? Do you know all about her? How she married my father in his cups—the horrid hussey!—and . . . ."

"Indeed it wasn't Lady Castlewood," interposed the wondering Harry.

"Then it was my aunt," continued the infuriate lady. "A pretty moralist, indeed! A Bishop's widow, forsooth, and I should like to know whose widow before and afterwards. Why, Harry, she intrigued with the Pretender, and with the Court of Hanover, and, I dare say, would with the Court of Rome and the Sultan of Turkey if she had had the means. Do you know who her second husband was? A creature who . . . ."

"But our aunt never spoke a word against you," broke in Harry, more and more amazed at the nymph's vehemence.

She checked her anger. In the inquisitive countenance opposite to her she thought she read some alarm as to the temper which she was exhibiting.

"Well, well! I am a fool," she said. "I want thee to think well of me, Harry!"

A hand is somehow put out and seized and, no doubt, kissed by the rapturous youth. "Angel!" he cries, looking into her face with his eager, honest eyes.

Two fish-pools irradiated by a pair of stars would not kindle to greater warmth than did those elderly orbs into which Harry poured his gaze. Nevertheless, he plunged into their blue depths, and fancied he saw heaven in their calm brightness. So that silly dog (of whom Æsop or the Spelling-book used to tell us in youth) beheld a beef-bone in the pond, and snapped at it, and lost the beef-bone he was carrying. Oh, absurd cur! He saw the beef-bone in his own mouth reflected in the treacherous pool, which dimpled, I dare say, with ever so many smiles, coolly sucked up the meat, and returned to its usual placidity. Ah! what a heap of wreck lie beneath some of those quiet surfaces! What treasures we have dropped into them! What chased golden dishes, what precious jewels of love, what bones after bones, and sweetest heart's flesh! Do not some *very* faithful and unlucky dogs jump in bodily, when they are swallowed up heads and tails entirely? When some women come to be *dragged*, it is a marvel what will be found in the depths of them. *Cavete, canes!* Have a care how ye lap that water. What do they want with us, the mischievous syren sluts? A green-eyed Naiad never rests until she has inveigled a fellow under the water; she sings after him, she dances after him; she winds round him, glittering tortuously; she warbles and whispers dainty secrets at his cheek, she kisses his feet, she leers at him from out of her rushes: all her beds sigh out, "Come, sweet youth! Hither, hither, rosy Hylas!" Pop goes Hylas. (Surely the fable is renewed for ever and ever?) Has his captivator any pleasure? Doth she take any account of him? No more than a fisherman landing at Brighton does of one out of a hundred thousand herrings. . . . The last time Ulysses rowed by the Sirens' bank, he and his men did not care though a whole shoal of them were singing and combing their longest locks. Young Telemachus was for jumping overboard: but the tough old crew held the silly, bawling lad. They were deaf, and could not hear his bawling nor the sea-nymphs' singing. They were dim of sight, and did not see how lovely the witches were. The stale, old, leering witches! Away with ye! I dare say you have painted your cheeks by this time; your wretched old songs are as out of fashion as Mozart, and it is all false hair you are combing!

In the last sentence you see Lector Benevolus and Scriptor Doctissimus figure as tough old Ulysses and his tough old Boatswain, who do not care a quid of tobacco for any Siren at Sirens' Point;

but Harry Warrington is green Telemachus, who, be sure, was very unlike the soft youth in the good Bishop of Cambray's twaddling story. *He* does not see that the syren paints the lashes from under which she ogles him; will put by into a box when she has done the ringlets into which she would inveigle him; and if she eats him, as she proposes to do, will crunch his bones with a new set of grinders just from the dentist's, and warranted for mastication. The song is not stale to Harry Warrington, nor the voice cracked or out of tune that sings it. But—but—Oh, dear me, Brother Boatswain! Don't you remember how pleasant the opera was when we first heard it? *Cosi fan tutti* was its name—Mozart's music. Now, I dare say, they have other words, and other music, and other singers and fiddlers, and another great crowd in the pit. Well, well, *Cosi fan tutti* is still upon the bills, and they are going on singing it over and over and over.

Any man or woman with a pennyworth of brains, or the like precious amount of personal experience, or who has read a novel before, must, when Harry pulled out those faded vegetables just now, have gone off into a digression of his own, as the writer confesses for himself he was diverging whilst he has been writing the last brace of paragraphs. If he sees a pair of lovers whispering in a garden alley or the embrasure of a window, or a pair of glances shot across the room from Jenny to the artless Jessamy, he falls to musing on former days when, &c. &c. These things follow each other by a general law, which is not as old as the hills, to be sure, but as old as the people who walk up and down them. When, I say, a lad pulls a bunch of amputated and now decomposing greens from his breast and falls to kissing it, what is the use of saying much more? As well tell the market-gardener's name from whom the slip-rose was bought—the waterings, clippings, trimmings, manurings, the plant has undergone—as tell how Harry Warrington came by it. *Rose, elle a vécu ce que vivent les roses*, has been trimmed, has been watered, has been potted, has been sticked, has been cut, worn, given away, transferred to yonder boy's pocket-book and bosom, according to the laws and fate appertaining to roses.

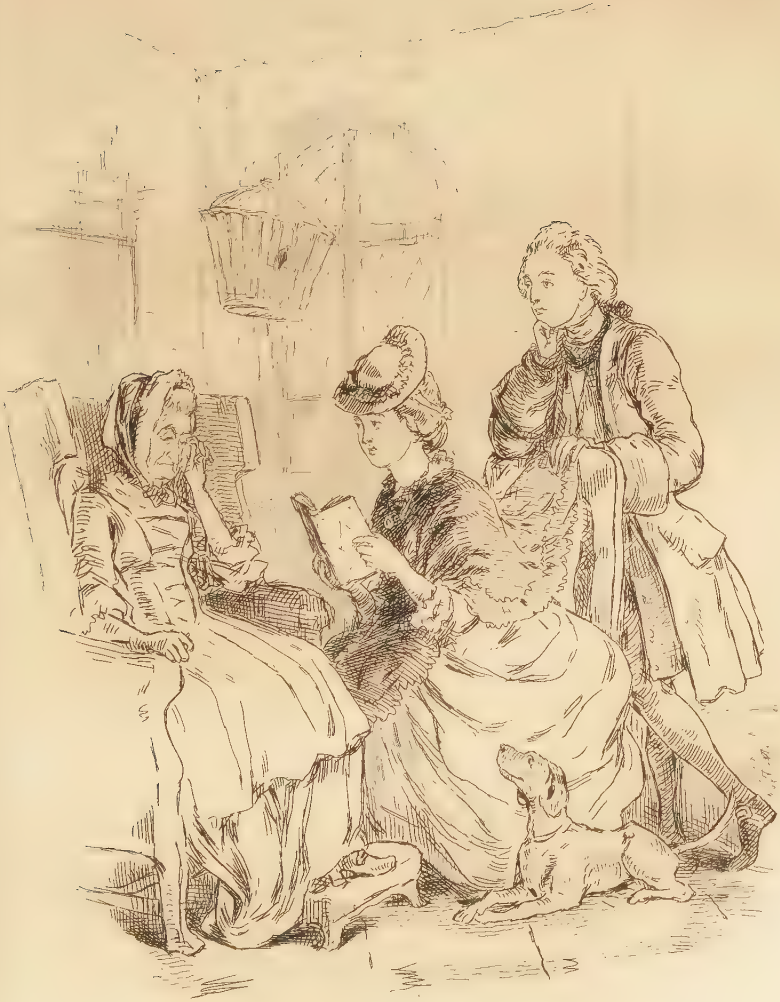
And how came Maria to give it to Harry? And how did he come to want it and to prize it so passionately when he got the bit of rubbish? Is not one story as stale as the other? Are not they all alike? What is the use, I say, of telling them over and over?

Harry values that rose because Maria has ogled him in the old way; because she has happened to meet him in the garden in the old way; because he has taken her hand in the old way; because they have whispered to one another behind the old curtain (the gaping old rag, as if everybody could not peep through it!); because, in this delicious weather, they have happened to be early risers and go into the park; because dear Goody Jenkins in the village happened to have a bad knee, and my Lady Maria went to read to her, and gave her calves'-foot jelly, and because somebody, of course, must carry the basket. Whole chapters might have been written to chronicle all these circumstances, but *à quoi bon?* The incidents of life, and love-making especially, I believe to resemble each other so much, that I am surprised, gentlemen and ladies, you read novels any more. Psha! Of course that rose in young Harry's pocket-book had grown, and had budded, and had bloomed, and was now rotting, like other roses. I suppose you will want me to say that the young fool kissed it next? Of course he kissed it. What were lips made for, pray, but for smiling and simpering, and (possibly) humbugging, and kissing, and opening to receive mutton-chops, cigars, and so forth. I cannot write this part of the story of our Virginians, because Harry did not dare to write it himself to anybody at home, because, if he wrote any letters to Maria (which, of course, he did, as they were in the same house, and might meet each other as much as they liked), they were destroyed; because he afterwards chose to be very silent about the story, and we can't have it from her ladyship, who never told the truth about anything. But *cui bono?* I say again. What is the good of telling the story? My gentle reader, take your story: take mine. To-morrow it shall be Miss Fanny's, who is just walking away with her doll to the school-room and the governess (poor victim! she has a version of it in her desk): and next day it shall be Baby's, who is bawling out on the stairs for his bottle.

Maria might like to have and exercise power over the young Virginian; but she did not want that Harry should quarrel with his aunt for her sake, or that Madame de Bernstein should be angry with her. Harry was not the Lord of Virginia yet: he was only the Prince, and the Queen might marry and have other Princes, and the laws of primogeniture might not be established in Virginia, *qu'en savait elle?* My lord her brother and she had exchanged no words at all about the delicate business. But they understood each other, and the Earl had a way of understanding things without speaking. He knew his Maria perfectly well: in the course of a life of which not a little had been spent in her brother's company and under his roof, Maria's disposition, ways, tricks, faults, had come to be perfectly understood by the head of the family: and she would find her little schemes checked or aided by him, as to his lordship seemed good, and without need of any words between them. Thus three days before, when she happened to be going to see that poor dear old Goody, who was ill with the sore knee in the village (and when Harry Warrington happened to be walking behind the elms on the green too), my lord with his dogs about him, and his gardener walking after him, crossed the court, just as Lady Maria was tripping to the gate-house—and his lordship called his sister, and said: "Molly, you are going to see Goody Jenkins. You are a charitable soul, my dear. Give Gammer Jenkins this half-crown for me—unless our cousin, Warrington, has already given her money. A pleasant walk to you. Let her want for nothing." And at supper, my lord asked Mr. Warrington many questions about the poor in Virginia, and the means of maintaining them, to which the young gentleman gave the best answers he might. His lordship wished that in the old country there were no more poor people than in the new: and recommended Harry to visit the poor and people of every degree, indeed high and low—in the country to look at the agriculture, in the city at the manfactures and municipal institutions—to which edifying advice Harry acceded with becoming modesty and few words, and Madame Bernstein nodded approval over her picquet with the chaplain. Next day, Harry was in my lord's justice-room: the next day he was out ever so long with my lord on the farm—and coming home, what does my lord do, but look in on a sick tenant? I think Lady Maria was out on that day, too; she had been reading good books to that poor dear Goody Jenkins, though I don't suppose Madame Bernstein ever thought of asking about her niece.

"*Castlewood, Hampshire, England, August* 5, 1757.

"MY DEAR MOUNTAIN,—At first, as I wrote, I did not like Castlewood, nor my cousins there, *very much.* Now, I am used to *their ways,* and we begin to understand each other *much better.* With my duty to my mother, tell her, I hope, that considering her ladyship's great kindness to me, Madam Esmond will be reconciled to her half-sister, the Baroness de Bernstein. The Baroness, you know, was my Grandmamma's daughter by her first husband, Lord Castlewood (only Grandpapa



A MINISTERING ANGEL

really was the *real* Lord); however, that was not his, that is the other Lord Castlewood's fault you know, and he was *very* kind to Grandpapa, who always spoke most kindly of him to us *as you know*.

"Madame the Baroness Bernstein first married a clergyman, Reverend Mr. Tusher, who was so *learned and good*, and such a favourite of his Majesty, as was my aunt, too, that he was made a *Bishopp*. When he died, *Our gracious King* continued his friendship to my aunt; who married a Hanoverian nobleman, who occupied a post at the Court—and I believe left the Baroness *very rich*. My cousin, my Lord Castlewood, told me so much about her, and I am sure *I* have found from her the greatest kindness and affection.

"The (Dowiger) Countess Castlewood and my cousins Will and Lady Fanny have been described per last, that went by the Falmouth packet on the 20th ult. The ladies are not changed *since then*. Me and Cousin Will are very good friends. We have rode out a good deal. We have had some famous cocking matches at Hampton and Winton. My cousin is a *sharp blade*, but I think I have shown him that we in Virginia know a thing or two. Reverend Mr. Sampson, chaplain of the famaly, *most excellent preacher, without any biggatry*.

"The kindness of my cousin the Earl improves every day, and by next year's ship I hope my mother will send his lordship some of our best roll tobacco (for tennants) and *hamms*. He is most *charatable* to the poor. His sister, Lady Maria, *equally so*. She sits for hours reading *good books to the sick:* she is most beloved in the village."

"Nonsense!" said a lady to whom Harry submitted his precious manuscript. "Why do you flatter me, cousin?"

"You *are* beloved in the village and out of it," said Harry, with a knowing emphasis, "and I have flattered you, as you call it, a little more still, further on."

"There is a sick old woman there, whom Madam Esmond would like, a most *raligious*, good, old lady.

"Lady Maria goes very often to read to her; which, she says, gives her comfort. But though her Ladyship hath the sweetest voice, *both in speaking and singeing* (she plays the church organ, and singes there *most beautifully*), I cannot think Gammer Jenkins can have any comfort from it, being very deaf, by reason of her great age. She has her memory perfectly, however, and remembers when my honoured Grandmother Rachel Lady Castlewood lived here. She says, my Grandmother was the best woman in the whole world, gave her a cow when she was married, and cured her husband, Gaffer Jenkins, of the *collects*, which he used to have very bad. I suppose it was with the Pills and Drops which my honored Mother put up in my boxes, when I left dear Virginia. Having never been ill since, have had no use for the pills. Gumbo hath, eating and drinking a great deal too much in the Servants' Hall. The next angel to my Grandmother (N.B. I think I spelt *angel* wrong per last), Gammer Jenkins says, is Lady Maria, who sends her duty to her Aunt in Virginia, and remembers her, and my Grandpapa and Grandmama when they were in Europe, and she was a little girl. You know they have Grandpapa's picture here, and I live in the very rooms which he had, and which are to be called mine, my Lord Castlewood says.

"Having no more to say, at present, I close with best love and duty to my honoured Mother, and with respects to Mr. Dempster, and a kiss for Fanny, and kind remembrances to Old Gumbo, Nathan, Old and Young Dinah, and the pointer dog and Slut, and all friends, from their well-wisher

"HENRY ESMOND WARRINGTON.

"Have wrote and sent my duty to my Uncle Warrington in Norfolk. No *anser* as yet."

"I hope the spelling is right, cousin?" asked the author of the letter, from the critic to whom he showed it.

"'Tis quite well enough spelt for any person of fashion," answered Lady Maria, who did not choose to be examined too closely regarding the orthography.

"One word 'Angel,' I know, I spelt wrong in writing to my mamma, but I have learned a way of spelling it right now."

"And how is that, sir?"

"I think 'tis by looking at you, cousin;" saying which words, Mr. Harry made her ladyship a low bow, and accompanied the bow by one of his best blushes, as if he were offering her a bow and a bouquet.

CHAPTER XIX.

CONTAINING BOTH LOVE AND LUCK.

AT the next meal, when the family party assembled, there was not a trace of displeasure in Madame de Bernstein's countenance, and her behaviour to all the company, Harry included, was perfectly kind and cordial. She praised the cook this time, declared the fricassée was excellent, and that there were no eels anywhere like those in the Castlewood moats; would not allow that the wine was corked, or hear of such extravagance as opening a fresh bottle for a useless old woman like her; gave Madam Esmond Warrington, of Virginia, as her toast, when the new wine was brought, and hoped Harry had brought away his mamma's permission to take back an English wife with him. He did not remember his grandmother; her, Madame de Bernstein's, dear mother? The Baroness amused the company with numerous stories of her mother, of her beauty and goodness, of her happiness with her second husband, though the wife was so much older than Colonel Esmond. To see them together, was delightful, she had heard. Their attachment was celebrated all through the country. To talk of disparity in marriages was vain after that. My Lady Castlewood and her two children held their peace whilst Madame Bernstein prattled. Harry was enraptured, and Maria surprised. Lord Castlewood was puzzled to know what sudden freak or scheme had occasioned this prodigious amiability on the part of his aunt; but did not allow the slightest expression or solicitude or doubt to appear on his countenance, which wore every mark of the most perfect satisfaction.

The Baroness's good-humour infected the whole family; not one person at table escaped a gracious word from her. In reply to some compliment to Mr. Will, when that artless youth uttered an expression of satisfaction and surprise at his aunt's behaviour, she frankly said: "Complimentary, my dear! Of course I am. I want to make up with you for having been exceedingly rude to everybody this morning. When I was a child, and my father and mother were alive, and lived here, I remember I used to adopt exactly the same behaviour. If I had been naughty in the morning, I used to try and coax my parents at night. I remember in this very room, at this very table—oh, ever so many hundred years ago!—so coaxing my father, and mother, and your grandfather, Harry Esmond; and there were eels for supper, as we have had them to-night, and it was that dish of collared eels which brought the circumstance back to my mind. I had been just as wayward that day, when I was seven years old, as I am to-day, when I am seventy, and so I confess my sins, and ask to be forgiven, like a good girl."

"I absolve your ladyship," cried the chaplain, who made one of the party.

"But your reverence does not know how cross and ill-tempered I was. I scolded my sister, Castlewood: I scolded her children, I boxed Harry Esmond's ears: and all because he would not go with me to Tunbridge Wells."

"But I will go, madam; I will ride with you with all the pleasure in life," said Mr. Warrington.

"You see, Mr. Chaplain, what good, dutiful children they all are. 'Twas I alone who was cross and peevish. Oh, it was cruel of me to treat them so! Maria, I ask your pardon, my dear."

"Sure, madam, you have done me no wrong," says Maria, to the humble suppliant.

"Indeed, I have, a very great wrong, child! Because I was weary of myself, I told you that your company would be wearisome to me. You offered to come with me to Tunbridge, and I rudely refused you."

"Nay, ma'am, if you were sick, and my presence annoyed you . . ."

"But it will not annoy me! You were most kind to say you would come. I do, of all things, beg, pray, entreat, implore, command that you will come."

My lord filled himself a glass, and sipped it. Most utterly unconscious did his lordship look. *This*, then, was the meaning of the previous comedy.

"Anything which can give my aunt pleasure, I am sure, will delight me," said Maria, trying to look as happy as possible.

"You must come and stay with me, my dear, and I promise to be good and good-humoured. My dear lord, you will spare your sister to me?"

"Lady Maria Esmond is quite of age to judge for herself about such a matter," said his lordship, with a bow. "If any of us can be of use to you, madam, you sure ought to command us." Which sentence, being interpreted, no doubt meant, "Plague take the old woman! She is taking Maria away in order to separate her from this young Virginian."

"Oh, Tunbridge will be delightful!" sighed Lady Maria.

"Mr. Sampson will go and see Goody Jones for *you*," my lord continued.

Harry drew pictures with his finger on the table. What delights had he not been speculating on? What walks, what rides, what interminable conversations, what delicious shrubberies and sweet sequestered summer-houses, what poring over music-books, what moonlight, what billing and cooing, had he not imagined! Yes, the day was coming. They were all departing—my Lady Castlewood to her friends, Madame Bernstein to her waters—and he was to be left alone with his divine charmer—alone with her and unutterable rapture! The thought of the pleasure was maddening. That these people were all going away. That he was to be left to enjoy that heaven—to sit at the feet of that angel and kiss the hem of that white robe. O Gods! 'twas too great bliss to be real! "I knew it couldn't be," thought poor Harry. "I knew something would happen to take her from me."

"But you will ride with us to Tunbridge, nephew Warrington, and keep us from the highwaymen?" said Madame de Bernstein.

Harry Warrington hoped the company did not see how red he grew. He tried to keep his voice calm and without tremor. Yes, he would ride with their ladyships, and he was sure they need fear no danger. Danger! Harry felt he would rather like danger than not. He would slay ten thousand highwaymen if they approached his mistress's coach. At least, he would ride by that coach, and now and again see her eyes at the window. He might not speak to her; but he should be near her. He should press the blessed hand at the inn at night, and feel it reposing on his as he led her to the carriage at morning. They would be two whole days going to Tunbridge, and one day or two he might stay there. Is not the poor wretch who is left for execution at Newgate thankful for even two or three days of respite?

You see, we have only indicated, we have not chosen to describe, at length, Mr. Harry Warrington's condition, or that utter depth of imbecility into which the poor young wretch was now plunged. Some boys have the complaint of love favourably and gently. Others, when they get the fever, are sick unto death with it; or, recovering, carry the marks of the malady down with them to the grave, or to remotest old age. I say, it is not fair to take down a young fellow's words when he is raging in that delirium. Suppose he is in love with a woman twice as old as himself, have we not all read of the young gentleman who committed suicide in consequence of his fatal passion for Mademoiselle Ninon de l'Enclos who turned out to be his grandmother? Suppose thou art making an ass of thyself, young Harry Warrington, of Virginia! are there not people in England who heehaw too? Kick and abuse him, you who have never brayed; but bear with him, all honest fellow-cardophagi: long-eared messmates, recognise a brother donkey!

"You will stay with us for a day or two at the Wells," Madame Bernstein continued. "You will see us put into our lodgings. Then you can return to Castlewood and the partridge-shooting, and all the fine things which you and my lord are to study together."

Harry bowed an acquiescence. A whole week of heaven! Life was not altogether a blank, then.

"And as there is sure to be plenty of company at the Wells, I shall be able to present you," the lady graciously added.

"Company! ah! I shan't need company," sighed out Harry. "I mean that I shall be quite contented in the company of you two ladies," he added, eagerly; and no doubt Mr. Will wondered at his cousin's taste.

As this was to be the last night of Cousin Harry's present visit to Castlewood, Cousin Will suggested that he, and his Reverence, and

Warrington should meet at the quarters of the latter and make up accounts, to which process, Harry, being a considerable winner in his play transactions with the two gentlemen, had no objection. Accordingly, when the ladies retired for the night, and my lord withdrew—as his custom was—to his own apartments, the three gentlemen all found themselves assembled in Mr. Harry's little room before the punch-bowl, which was Will's usual midnight companion.

But Will's method of settling accounts was by producing a couple of fresh packs of cards, and offering to submit Harry's debt to the process of being doubled or acquitted. The poor chaplain had no more ready cash than Lord Castlewood's younger brother. Harry Warrington wanted to win the money of neither. Would he give pain to the brother of his adored Maria, or allow any one of her near kinsfolk to tax him with any want of generosity or forbearance? He was ready to give them their revenge, as the gentlemen proposed. Up to midnight he would play with them for what stakes they chose to name. And so they set to work, and the dice-box was rattled and the cards shuffled and dealt.

Very likely he did not think about the cards at all. Very likely he was thinking:—"At this moment, my beloved one is sitting with her beauteous golden locks outspread under the fingers of her maid. Happy maid! Now she is on her knees, the sainted creature, addressing prayers to that heaven which is the abode of angels like her. Now she has sunk to rest behind her damask curtains. O bless, bless her!" "You double us all round? I will take a card upon each of my two. Thank you, that will do—a ten—now, upon the other, a queen,—two natural vingt-et-uns, and as you doubled us you owe me so and so."

I imagine volleys of oaths from Mr. William, and brisk pattering of imprecations from his Reverence, at the young Virginian's luck. He won because he did not want to win. Fortune, that notoriously coquettish jade, came to him, because he was thinking of another nymph, who possibly was as fickle. Will and the chaplain may have played against him, solicitous constantly to increase their stakes, and supposing that the wealthy Virginian wished to let them recover all their losings. But this was by no means Harry Warrington's notion. When he was at home he had taken a part in scores of such games as these (whereby we may be led to suppose that he kept many little circumstances of his life mum from his lady mother), and had learned to play and pay. And as he practised fair play towards his friends he expected it from them in return.

"The luck does seem to be with me, cousin," he said, in reply to some more oaths and growls of Will, "and I am sure I do not want to press it; but you don't suppose I am going to be such a fool as to fling it away altogether? I have quite a heap of your promises on paper by this time. If we are to go on playing, let us have the dollars on the table, if you please; or, if not the money, the worth of it."

"Always the way with you rich men," grumbled Will. "Never lend except on security—always win because you are rich."

"Faith, cousin, you have been of late for ever flinging my riches into my face. I have enough for my wants and for my creditors."

"Oh that we could all say as much," groaned the chaplain. "How happy we, and how happy the duns would be! What have we got to play against our conqueror? There is my new gown, Mr. Warrington. Will you set me five pieces against it? I have but to preach in stuff if I lose. Stop! I have a 'Chrysostom,' a 'Fox's Martyrs,' a 'Baker's Chronicle,' and a cow and her calf. What shall we set against these?"

"I will bet one of Cousin Will's notes for twenty pounds," cried Mr. Warrington, producing one of those documents.

"Or I have my black mare, and will back her not against your honour's notes of hand, but against ready money."

"I have my horse. I will back my horse against you for fifty!" bawls out Will.

Harry took the offers of both gentlemen. In the course of ten minutes the horse and the black mare had both changed owners. Cousin William swore more fiercely than ever. The parson dashed his wig to the ground, and emulated his pupil in the loudness of his objurgations. Mr. Harry Warrington was quite calm, and not the least elated by his triumph. They had asked him to play, and he had played. He knew he should win. Oh beloved slumbering angel! he thought, am I not sure of victory when *you* are kind to me? He was looking out from his window towards the casement on the opposite side of the court, which he knew to be hers. He had forgot about his victims and their groans, and ill luck, ere they crossed the court. Under yonder brilliant flickering star, behind yonder casement where the lamp was burning faintly, was his joy, and heart, and treasure.

CHAPTER XX.

FACILIS DESCENSUS.

WHILST the good old Bishop of Cambray, in his romance lately mentioned, described the disconsolate condition of Calypso at the departure of Ulysses, I forget whether he mentioned the grief of Calypso's lady's-maid on taking leave of Odysseus's own gentleman. The menials must have wept together in the kitchen precincts whilst the master and mistress took a last wild embrace in the drawing-room; they must have hung round each other in the fore-cabin, whilst their principals broke their hearts in the grand-saloon. When the bell rang for the last time, and Ulysses's mate bawled, "Now! any one for shore!" Calypso and her female attendant must have both walked over the same plank, with beating hearts and streaming eyes; both must have waved pocket-handkerchiefs (of far different value and texture), as they stood on the quay, to their friends on the departing vessel, whilst the people on the land and the crew crowding in the ship's bows shouted, Hip, hip, huzzay (or whatever may be the equivalent Greek for the salutation) to all engaged on that voyage. But the point to be remembered is, that if Calypso *ne pouvait se consoler*, Calypso's maid *ne pouvait se consoler non plus.* They had to walk the same plank of grief, and feel the same pang of separation; on their return home, they might not use pocket-handkerchiefs of the same texture and value, but the tears, no doubt, were as salt and plentiful which one shed in her marble halls, and the other poured forth in the servant's ditto.

Not only did Harry Warrington leave Castlewood a victim to love, but Gumbo quitted the same premises a prey to the same delightful passion. His wit, accomplishments, good-humour, his skill in dancing, cookery, and music, had endeared him to the whole female domestic circle. More than one of the men might be jealous of him, but the ladies all were with him. There was no such objection to the poor black men then in England as has obtained since among white-skinned people. Theirs was a condition not perhaps of equality, but they had a sufferance and a certain grotesque sympathy from all; and from women, no doubt, a kindness much more generous. When Ledyard and Park, in Blackmansland, were persecuted by the men, did they not find the black women pitiful and kind to them? Women are always kind towards our sex. What (mental) negroes do they not cherish? what (moral) hunchbacks do they not adore? what lepers, what idiots, what dull drivellers, what misshapen monsters (I speak figuratively) do they not fondle and cuddle? Gumbo was treated by the women as kindly as many people no better than himself: it was only the men in the servants' hall who rejoiced at the Virginian lad's departure. I should like to see him taking leave. I should like to see Molly, housemaid, stealing to the terrace-gardens in the grey dawning to cull a wistful posy. I should like to see Betty, kitchenmaid, cutting off a thick lock of her chestnut ringlets which she proposed to exchange for a woolly token from young Gumbo's pate. Of course he said he was *regum progenies*, a descendant of Ashantee kings. In Caffraria, Connaught, and other places now inhabited by hereditary bondsmen, there must have been vast numbers of these potent sovereigns in former times, to judge from their descendants now extant.

At the morning announced for Madame de Bernstein's departure, all the numerous domestics of Castlewood crowded about the doors and passages, some to have a last glimpse of her ladyship's men and the fascinating Gumbo, some to take leave of her ladyship's maid, all to waylay the Baroness and her nephew for parting fees, which it was the custom of that day largely to distribute among household servants. One and the other gave liberal gratuities to the liveried society, to the gentlemen in black and ruffles, and to the swarm of female attendants. Castlewood was the home of the Baroness's youth, and as for her honest Harry, who had not only lived at free charges in the house, but had won horses and money—or promises of money—from his cousin and the unlucky chaplain, he was naturally of a generous turn, and felt that at this moment he ought not to stint his benevolent disposition. "My mother, I know," he thought, "will wish me to be liberal to all the retainers of the Esmond family." So he scattered about his gold pieces to right and left, and as if he had been as rich as Gumbo announced him to be. There was no one who came near him but had a share in his bounty. From the major-domo to the shoe-black, Mr. Harry had a peace-offering for them all. To the grim housekeeper in her still room, to the feeble old porter in his lodge he distributed some token of his remembrance. When a man is in love with one woman in a family, it is astonishing how fond he becomes of every person connected with it. He ingratiates himself with the maids; he is bland with the butler; he interests himself about the footman; he runs on errands for the daughters; he gives advice and lends money to the young son at college; he pats little dogs which he would kick otherwise; he smiles at old stories which would make him break out in yawns, were they uttered by any one but papa; he drinks sweet port wine for which he would curse the steward and the whole committee of a club; he bears even with the cantankerous old maiden aunt; he beats time when darling little Fanny performs her piece on the piano; and smiles when wicked, lively little Bobby upsets the coffee over his shirt.

Harry Warrington, in his way, and according to the customs of that age, had for a brief time past (by which I conclude that only for a brief time had his love been declared and accepted) given to the Castlewood family all these artless testimonies of his affection for one of them. Cousin Will should have won back his money and welcome, or have won as much of Harry's own as the lad could spare. Nevertheless, the lad, though a lover, was shrewd, keen, and fond of sport and fair play, and a judge of a good horse when he saw one. Having played for and won all the money which Will had, besides a great number of Mr. Esmond's valuable autographs, Harry was very well pleased to win Will's brown horse—that very quadruped which had nearly pushed him into the water on the first evening of his arrival at Castlewood. He had seen the horse's performance often, and, in the midst of all his passion and romance, was not sorry to be possessed of such a sound, swift, well-bred hunter and roadster. When he had gazed at the stars sufficiently as they shone over his mistress's window, and put her candle to bed, he repaired to his own dormitory, and there, no doubt, thought of his Maria and his horse with youthful satisfaction, and how sweet it would be to have one pillioned on the other, and to make the tour of all the island on such an animal with such a pair of white arms round his waist. He fell asleep ruminating on these things, and meditating a million of blessings on his Maria, in whose company he was to luxuriate at least for a week more.

In the early morning poor Chaplain Sampson sent over his little black mare by the hands of his groom, footman, and gardener, who wept and bestowed a great number of kisses on the beast's white nose as he handed him over to Gumbo. Gumbo and his master were both affected by the fellow's sensibility; the negro servant showing his sympathy by weeping, and Harry by producing a couple of guineas, with which he astonished and speedily comforted the chaplain's boy. Then Gumbo and the late groom led the beast away to the stable, having commands to bring him round with Mr. William's horse after breakfast, at the hour when Madame Bernstein's carriages were ordered.

So courteous was he to his aunt, or so grateful for her departure, that the master of the house even made his appearance at the morning meal, in order to take leave of his guests. The ladies and the chaplain were present—the only member of the family absent was Will: who, however, left a note for his cousin, in which Will stated, in exceedingly bad spelling, that he was obliged to go away to Salisbury races that morning, but that he had left the horse which his cousin won last night, and which Tom, Mr. Will's groom, would hand over to Mr. Warrington's servant. Will's absence did not prevent the rest of the party from drinking a dish of tea amicably, and in due time the carriages rolled into the courtyard, the servants packed them with the Baroness's multiplied luggage, and the moment of departure arrived.

A large open landau contained the stout Baroness and her niece; a couple of men-servants mounting on the box before them with pistols and blunderbusses ready in event of a meeting with highwaymen. In another carriage were their ladyships' maids, and another servant in guard of the trunks, which, vast and numerous as they were, were as nothing compared to the enormous baggage-train accompanying a lady of the present time. Mr. Warrington's modest valises were placed in this second carriage under the maids' guardianship, and Mr. Gumbo proposed to ride by the window for the chief part of the journey.

My lord, with his step-mother and Lady Fanny, accompanied their kinswoman to the carriage-steps, and bade her farewell with many dutiful embraces. The Lady Maria followed in a riding-dress, which Harry Warrington thought the most becoming costume in the world. A host of servants stood around, and begged heaven bless her ladyship. The Baroness's departure was known in the village, and scores of the folks there stood waiting under the trees outside the gates, and huzzayed and waved their hats as the ponderous vehicles rolled away.

Gumbo was gone for Mr. Warrington's horses, as my lord, with his arm under his young guest's, paced up and down the court. "I hear you carry away some of our horses out of Castlewood?" my lord said.

Harry blushed. "A gentleman cannot refuse a fair game at the cards," he said. "I never wanted to play, nor would have played for money had not my cousin William forced me. As for the chaplain, it went to my heart to win from him, but he was as eager as my cousin."

"I know—I know! There is no blame to you, my boy. At Rome you can't help doing as Rome does; and I am very glad that you have been able to give Will a lesson. He is mad about play—would gamble his coat off his back—and I and the family have had to pay his debts ever so many times. May I ask how much you have won of him?"

"Well, some eighteen pieces the first day or two, and his note for a hundred and twenty more, and the brown horse, fifty—that makes nigh upon two hundred. But, you know, cousin, all was fair, and it was even against my will that we played at all. Will ain't a match for me, my lord—that is the fact. Indeed he is not."

"He is a match for most people, though," said my lord. "His brown horse, I think you said?"

"Yes. His brown horse—Prince William, out of Constitution. You don't suppose I would set him fifty against his bay, my lord?"

"Oh, I didn't know. I saw Will riding out this morning, most likely I did not remark what horse he was on. And you won the black mare from the parson?"

"For fourteen. He will mount Gumbo very well. Why does not the rascal come round with the horses?" Harry's mind was away to lovely Maria. He longed to be trotting by her side.

"When you get to Tunbridge, Cousin Harry, you must be on the look-out against sharper players than the chaplain and Will. There is all sorts of queer company at the Wells."

"A Virginian learns pretty early to take care of himself, my lord," says Harry, with a knowing nod.

"So it seems! I recommend my sister to thee, Harry. Although she is not a baby in years, she is as innocent as one. Thou wilt see that she comes to no mischief?"

"I will guard her with my life, my lord!" cries Harry.

"Thou art a brave fellow. By the way, cousin, unless you are very fond of Castlewood, I would in your case not be in a great hurry to return to this lonely, tumble-down old house. I want myself to go to another place I have, and shall scarce be back here till the partridge-shooting. Go you and take charge of the women, of my sister and the Baroness, will you?"

"Indeed I will," said Harry, his heart beating with happiness at the thought.

"And I will write thee word when you shall bring my sister back to me. Here come the horses. Have you bid adieu to the countess and Lady Fanny? They are kissing their hands to you from the music-room balcony."

Harry ran up to bid these ladies a farewell. He made that ceremony very brief, for he was anxious to be off to the charmer of his heart; and came downstairs to mount his newly-gotten steed, which Gumbo, himself astride on the parson's black mare, held by the rein.

There was Gumbo on the black mare, indeed, and holding another horse. But it was a bay horse—not a brown—a bay horse with broken knees—an aged, worn-out quadruped.

"What is this?" cries Harry.

"Your honour's new horse," says the groom, touching his cap.

"This brute?" exclaims the young gentleman, with one or more of those expressions then in use in England and Virginia. "Go and bring me round Prince William, Mr. William's horse, the brown horse."

"Mr. William have rode Prince William this morning away to Salisbury races. His last words was, 'Sam, saddle my bay horse, Cato, for Mr. Warrington this morning. He is Mr. Warrington's horse now. I sold him to him last night.' And I know your honour is bountiful: you will consider the groom."

My lord could not help breaking into a laugh at these words of Sam, the groom, whilst Harry, for his part, indulged in a number more of those remarks which politeness does not admit of our inserting here.

"Mr. William said he never could think of parting with the Prince under a hundred and twenty," said the groom, looking at the young man.

Lord Castlewood only laughed the more. "Will has been too much for thee, Harry Warrington."

"Too much for me, my lord! So may a fellow with loaded dice throw sixes, and be too much for me. I do not call this betting, I call it ch——"

"Mr. Warrington! Spare me bad words about my brother, if you please. Depend on it, I will take care that you are righted. Farewell. Ride quickly, or your coaches will be at Farnham before you;' and waving him an adieu, my lord entered into the house, whilst Harry and his companion rode out of the courtyard. The young Virginian was much too eager to rejoin the carriages and his charmer, to remark the glances of unutterable love and affection which Gumbo shot from his fine eyes towards a young creature in the porter's lodge.

When the youth was gone, the chaplain and my lord sat down to finish their breakfast in peace and comfort. The two ladies did not return to this meal.

"That was one of Will's confounded rascally tricks," says my lord, "If our cousin breaks Will's head I should not wonder."

"He is used to the operation, my lord, and yet," adds the chaplain, with a grin, "when we were playing last night, the colour of the horse was not mentioned. I could not escape, having but one: and the black boy has ridden off on him. The young Virginian plays like a man, to do him justice."

"He wins because he does not care about losing. I think there can be little doubt but that he is very well to do. His mother's law-agents are my lawyers, and they write that the property is quite a principality, and grows richer every year."

"If it were a kingdom I know whom Mr. Warrington would make queen of it," said the obsequious chaplain.

"Who can account for taste, parson?" asks his lordship, with a sneer. "All men are so. The first woman I was in love with myself was forty; and as jealous as if she had been fifteen. It runs in the family. Colonel Esmond (he in scarlet and the breastplate yonder) married my grandmother, who was almost old enough to be his. If this lad chooses to take out an elderly princess to Virginia, we must not baulk him."

"'Twere a consummation devoutly to be wished!" cries the chaplain. "Had I not best go to Tunbridge Wells myself, my lord, and be on the spot, and ready to exercise my sacred function in behalf of the young couple?"

"You shall have a pair of new nags, parson, if you do," said my lord. And with this we leave them peaceable over a pipe of tobacco after breakfast.

Harry was in such a haste to join the carriages that he almost forgot to take off his hat, and acknowledge the cheers of the Castlewood villagers: they all liked the lad, whose frank cordial ways and honest face got him a welcome in most places. Legends were still extant in Castlewood of his grandparents, and how his grandfather, Colonel Esmond, might have been Lord Castlewood, but would not. Old Lockwood at the gate often told of the Colonel's gallantry in Queen Anne's wars. His feats were exaggerated, the behaviour of the present family was contrasted with that of the old lord and lady: who might not have been very popular in their time, but were better folks than those now in possession. Lord Castlewood was a hard landlord: perhaps more disliked because he was known to be poor and embarrassed than because he was severe. As for Mr. Will, nobody was fond of him. The young gentleman had had many brawls and quarrels about the village, had received and given broken heads, had bills in the neighbouring towns which he could not or would not pay; had been arraigned before magistrates for tampering with village girls, and waylaid and cudgelled by injured husbands, fathers, sweethearts. A hundred years ago his character and actions might have been described at length by the painter of manners; but the Comic Muse, now-a-days, does not lift up Molly Seagrim's curtain; she only indicates the presence of some one behind it, and passes on primly, with expressions of horror, and a fan before her eyes. The village had heard how the young Virginian squire had beaten Mr. Will at riding, at jumping, at shooting, and finally at card-playing, for everything is known; and they respected Harry all the more for this superiority. Above all, they admired him on account of the reputation of enormous wealth which Gumbo had made for his master. This fame had travelled over the whole county, and was preceding him at this moment on the boxes of Madame Bernstein's carriages, from which the valets, as they descended at the inns to bait, spread astounding reports of the young Virginian's rank and splendour. He was a prince in his own country. He had gold mines, diamond mines, furs, tobaccos, who knew what, or how much? No wonder the honest Britons cheered him and respected him for his prosperity, as the noble-hearted fellows always do. I am surprised city corporations did not address him, and offer gold boxes with the freedom of the city—he was so rich. Ah, a proud thing it is to be a Briton, and think that there is no country where prosperity is so much respected as in ours: and where success receives such constant affecting testimonials of loyalty.

So, leaving the villagers bawling, and their hats tossing in the air, Harry spurred his sorry beast, and galloped, with Gumbo behind him, until he came up with the cloud of dust in the midst of which his charmer's chariot was enveloped. Penetrating into this cloud, he found himself at the window of the carriage. The Lady Maria had the back seat to herself; by keeping a little behind the wheels, he could have the delight of seeing her divine eyes and smiles. She held a finger to her lip. Madame Bernstein was already dozing on her cushions. Harry did not care to disturb the old lady. To look at his cousin was bliss enough for him. The landscape around him might be beautiful, but what did he heed it? All the skies and trees of summer were as nothing compared to yonder face; the hedgerow birds sang no such sweet music as her sweet monosyllables.

The Baroness's fat horses were accustomed to short journeys, easy paces, and plenty of feeding; so that, ill as Harry Warrington was mounted, he could, without much difficulty, keep pace with his elderly kinswoman. At two o'clock they baited for a couple of hours for dinner. Mr. Warrington paid the landlord generously. What price could be too great for the pleasure which he enjoyed in being near his adored Maria, and having the blissful chance of a conversation with her, scarce interrupted by the soft breathing of Madame de Bernstein, who, after a comfortable meal, indulged in an agreeable half-hour's slumber? In voices soft and low, Maria and her young gentleman talked over and over again those delicious nonsenses which people in Harry's condition never tire of hearing and uttering.

They were going to a crowded watering-place, where all sorts of beauty and fashion would be assembled; timid Maria was certain that amongst the young beauties, Harry would discover some whose charms were far more worthy to occupy his attention than any her homely face and figure could boast of. By all the gods Harry vowed that Venus herself could not tempt him from her side. It was he who for his part had occasion to fear. When the young men of fashion beheld his peerless Maria they would crowd round her car; they would cause her to forget the rough and humble American lad who knew nothing of fashion or wit, who had only a faithful heart at her service.

Maria smiles, she casts her eyes to heaven, she vows that Harry knows nothing of the truth and fidelity of woman; it is his sex, on the contrary, which proverbially is faithless, and which delights to play with poor female hearts. A scuffle ensues; a clatter is heard among the knives and forks of the dessert; a glass tumbles over and breaks. An "Oh!" escapes from the innocent lips of Maria. The disturbance has been caused by the broad cuff of Mr. Warrington's coat, which has been stretched across the table to seize Lady Maria's hand, and has upset the wine-glass in so doing. Surely nothing could be more natural, or indeed necessary, than that Harry, upon hearing his sex's honour impeached, should seize upon his fair accuser's hand, and vow eternal fidelity upon those charming fingers?

What a part they play, or used to play, in love-making, those hands! How quaintly they are squeezed at that period of life! How they are pushed into conversation! what absurd vows and protests are palmed off by their aid! What good can there be in pulling and pressing a thumb and four fingers? I fancy I see Alexis laugh, who is haply reading this page by the side of Araminta. To talk about thumbs indeed! . . . . Maria looks round, for her part, to see if Madame Bernstein has been awakened by the crash of the glass; but the old lady slumbers quite calmly in her arm-chair, so her niece thinks there can be no harm in yielding to Harry's gentle pressure.

The horses are put to: Paradise is over—at least until the next occasion. When my landlord enters with the bill, Harry is standing quite at a distance from his cousin, looking from the window at the cavalcade gathering below. Madame Bernstein wakes up from her slumber, smiling and quite unconscious. With what profound care and reverential politeness Mr. Warrington hands his aunt to her carriage ! how demure and simple looks Lady Maria as she follows ! Away go the carriages, in the midst of a profoundly bowing landlord and waiters ; of country folks gathered round the blazing inn-sign ; of shopmen gazing from their homely little doors ; of boys and market-folks under the colonnade of the old town-hall ; of loungers along the gabled street. "It is the famous Baroness Bernstein. That is she, the old lady in the capuchin. It is the rich young American who is just come from Virginia, and is worth millions and millions. Well, sure, he might have a better horse." The cavalcade disappears, and the little town lapses into its usual quiet. The landlord goes back to his friends at the club, to tell how the great folks are going to sleep at "The Bush," at Farnham, to-night.

The inn-dinner had been plentiful, and all the three guests of the inn had done justice to the good cheer. Harry had the appetite natural to his period of life. Maria and her aunt were also not indifferent to a good dinner : Madame Bernstein had had a comfortable nap after hers, which had no doubt helped her to bear all the good things of the meal—the meat pies, and the fruit pies, and the strong ale, and the heady port wine. She reclined at ease on her seat of the landau, and looked back affably, and smiled at Harry and exchanged a little talk with him as he rode by the carriage side. But what ailed the beloved being who sat with her back to the horses ? Her complexion, which was exceedingly fair, was farther ornamented with a pair of red cheeks, which Harry took to be natural roses. (You see, madam, that your surmises regarding the Lady Maria's conduct with her cousin are quite wrong and uncharitable, and that the timid lad had made no such experiments as you suppose, in order to ascertain whether the roses were real or artificial. A kiss, indeed ! I blush to think you should imagine that the present writer could indicate anything so shocking !) Maria's bright red cheeks, I say still, continued to blush as it seemed with a strange metallic bloom : but the rest of her face, which had used to rival the lily in whiteness, became of a jonquil colour. Her eyes stared round with a ghastly expression. Harry was alarmed at the agony depicted in the charmer's countenance; which not only exhibited pain, but was exceedingly unbecoming. Madame Bernstein also at length remarked her niece's indisposition, and asked her if sitting backwards in the carriage made her ill, which poor Maria confessed to be the fact. On this, the elder lady was forced to make room for her niece on her own side, and, in the course of the drive to Farnham uttered many gruff, disagreeable, sarcastic remarks to her fellow-traveller, indicating her great displeasure that Maria should be so impertinent as to be ill on the first day of a journey.

When they reached the "Bush Inn" at Farnham, under which name a famous inn has stood in Farnham town for these three hundred years — the dear invalid retired with her maid to her bedroom: scarcely glancing a piteous look at Harry as she retreated, and leaving the lad's mind in a strange confusion of dismay and sympathy. Those yellow, yellow cheeks, those livid wrinkled eyelids, that ghastly red—how ill his blessed Maria looked! And not only how ill, but how—away, horrible thought, unmanly suspicion! He tried to shut the idea out from his mind. He had little appetite for supper, though the jolly Baroness partook of that repast as if she had had no dinner; and certainly as if she had no sympathy with her invalid niece.

She sent her major domo to see if Lady Maria would have anything from the table. The servant brought back word that her ladyship was still very unwell, and declined any refreshment.

"I hope she intends to be well to-morrow morning," cried Madame Bernstein, rapping her little hand on the table. "I hate people to be ill in an inn, or on a journey. Will you play picquet with me, Harry?"

Harry was happy to be able to play picquet with his aunt. "That absurd Maria!" says Madame Bernstein, drinking from a great glass of negus, "she takes liberties with herself. She never had a good constitution. She is forty-one years old. All her upper teeth are false, and she can't eat with them. Thank heaven, I have still got every tooth in my head. How clumsily you deal, child!"

Deal clumsily, indeed! Had a dentist been extracting Harry's own grinders at that moment, would he have been expected to mind his cards, and deal them neatly? When a man is laid on the rack at the Inquisition, is it natural that he should smile and speak politely and coherently to the grave, quiet Inquisitor? Beyond that little question regarding the cards, Harry's Inquisitor did not show the smallest disturbance. Her face indicated neither surprise, nor triumph, nor cruelty. Madame Bernstein did not give one more stab to her niece that night: but she played at cards, and prattled with Harry, indulging in her favourite talk about old times, and parting from him with great cordiality and good humour. Very likely he did not heed her stories. Very likely other thoughts occupied his mind. Maria is forty-one years old, Maria has false—Oh, horrible, horrible! Has she a false eye? Has she false hair? Has she a wooden leg? I envy not that boy's dreams that night.

Madame Bernstein, in the morning, said she had slept as sound as a top. *She* had no remorse, that was clear. (Some folks are happy and easy in mind when their victim is stabbed and done for.) Lady Maria made her appearance at the breakfast-table, too. Her ladyship's indisposition was fortunately over: her aunt congratulated her affectionately on her good looks. She sat down to her breakfast. She looked appealingly in Harry's face. He remarked, with his usual brilliancy and originality, that he was very glad her ladyship was better. Why, at the tone of his voice, did she start, and again gaze at him with frightened eyes? There sat the Chief Inquisitor, smiling, perfectly calm, eating ham and muffins. Oh, poor writhing, rack-rent victim! Oh, stony Inquisitor! Oh, Baroness Bernstein! It was cruel! cruel!

Round about Farnham the hops were gloriously green in the sunshine, and the carriages drove through the richest, most beautiful country. Maria insisted upon taking her old seat. She thanked her dear aunt. It would not in the least incommode her now. She gazed, as she had done yesterday, in the face of the young knight riding by the carriage side. She looked for those answering signals which used to be lighted up in yonder two windows, and told that love was burning within. She smiled gently at him, to which token of regard he tried to answer with a sickly grin of recognition. Miserable youth! *Those* were not false teeth he saw when she smiled. He thought they were, and they tore and lacerated him.

And so the day sped on—sunshiny and brilliant overhead, but all over clouds for Harry and Maria. He saw nothing: he thought of Virginia: he remembered how he had been in love with Parson Broadbent's daughter at Jamestown, and how quickly that business had ended. He longed vaguely to be at home again. A plague on all these cold-hearted English relations! Did they not all mean to trick him? Were they not all scheming against him? Had not that confounded Will cheated him about the horse?

At this very juncture Maria gave a scream so loud and shrill that Madame Bernstein woke, the coachman pulled his horses up, and the footman beside him sprang down from his box in a panic.

"Let me out! let me out!" screamed Maria. "Let me go to him! let me go to him!"

"What is it?" asked the Baroness.

It was that Will's horse had come down on his knees and nose, had sent his rider over his head; and Mr. Harry, who ought to have known better, was lying on his own face quite motionless.

Gumbo, who had been dallying with the maids of the second carriage, clattered up, and mingled his howls with Lady Maria's lamentations. Madame Bernstein descended from her landau, and came slowly up, trembling a good deal.

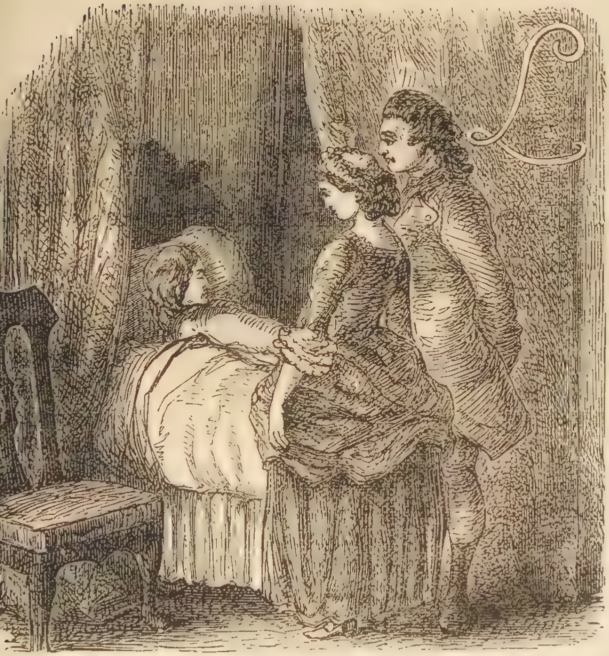
"He is dead—he is dead!" sobbed Maria.

"Don't be a goose, Maria!" her aunt said. "Ring at that gate some one!"

Will's horse had gathered himself up and stood perfectly quiet after his feat: but his late rider gave not the slightest sign of life.

CHAPTER XXI.

SAMARITANS.



LEST any tender-hearted reader should be in alarm for Mr. Harry Warrington's safety, and fancy that his broken-knee'd horse had carried him altogether out of this life and history, let us set her mind easy at the beginning of this chapter, by assuring her that nothing very serious has happened. How can we afford to kill off our heroes, when they are scarcely out of their teens, and we have not reached the age of manhood of the story? We are in mourning already for one of our Virginians, who has come to grief in America; surely we cannot kill off the other in England? No, no. Heroes are not despatched with such hurry and violence unless there is a cogent reason for making away with them. Were a gentleman to perish every time a horse came down with him, not only the hero, but the author of this chronicle would have gone under ground, whereas the former is but sprawling outside it, and will be brought to life again as soon as he has been carried into the house where Madame de Bernstein's servants have rung the bell.

And to convince you that at least this youngest of the Virginians is still alive, here is an authentic copy of a letter from the lady into whose house he was taken after his fall from Mr. Will's brute of a broken-knee'd horse, and in whom he appears to have found a kind friend.

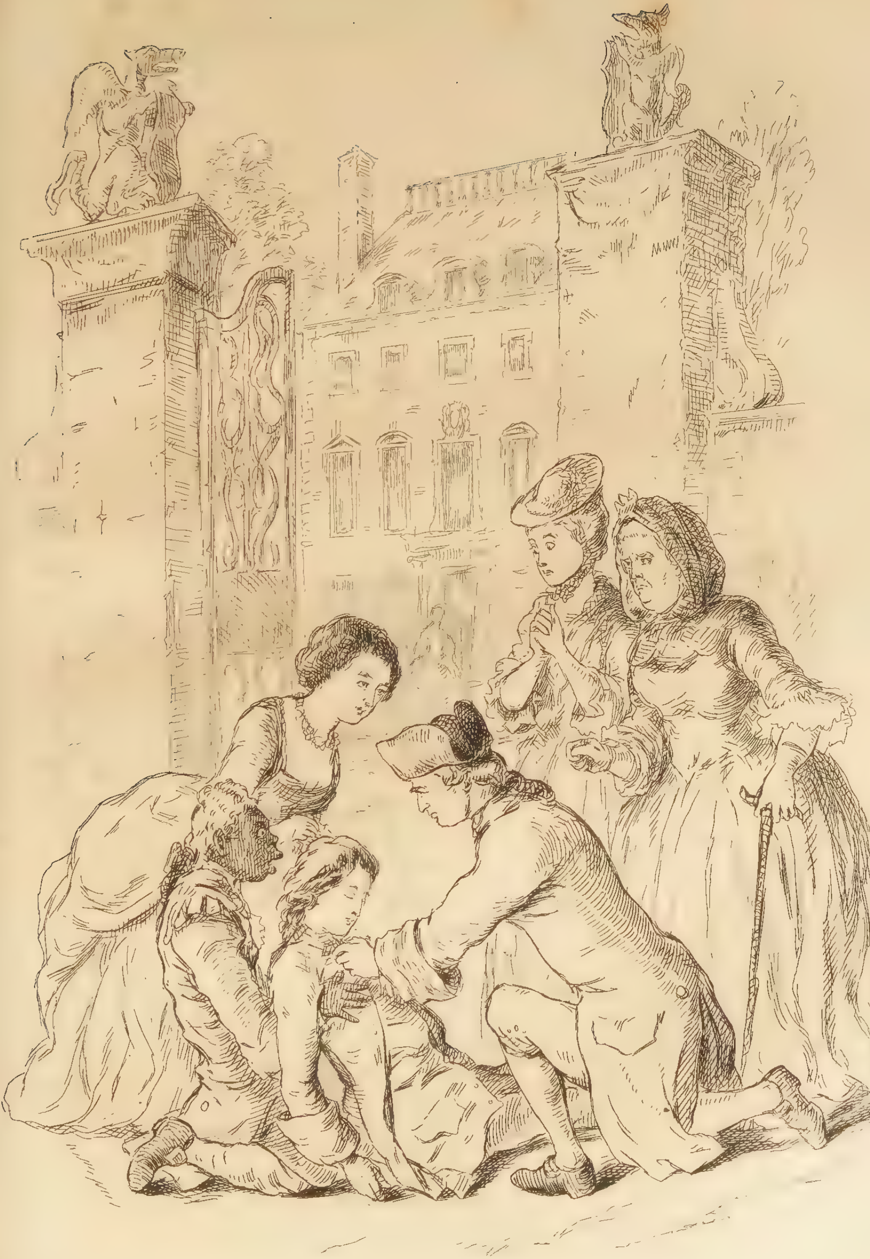
"TO MRS. ESMOND WARRINGTON, OF CASTLEWOOD,

"AT HER HOUSE AT RICHMOND, IN VIRGINIA.

"If Mrs. Esmond Warrington of Virginia can call to mind twenty-three years ago, when Miss Rachel Esmond was at Kensington Boarding School, she may perhaps remember Miss Molly Benson, her class mate, who has forgotten all the little quarrels which they used to have together (in which Miss Molly was very often in the wrong), and only remembers the *generous*, *high-spirited*, *sprightly Miss Esmond*, the Princess Pocahontas, to whom so many of our school-fellows paid court.

"Dear Madam! I can never forget that you were *dear Rachel* once upon a time, as I was your dearest Molly. Though we parted not very good friends when you went home to Virginia, yet you know how fond we once were. I still, Rachel, have the gold *étui* your papa gave me when he came to *our speech-day* at Kensington, and we two performed the quarrel of Brutus and Cassius out of Shakspeare; and 'twas only yesterday morning I was dreaming that we were both called up to say our lesson before *the awful Miss Hardwood*, and that I did not know it, and that as usual Miss Rachel Esmond went above me. How well remembered those old days are! How young we grow as we think of them! I remember our walks and our exercises, our good King and Queen as they walked in Kensington Gardens, and their court following them, whilst we of Miss Hardwood's school curtseyed in a row. I can tell still what we had for dinner on each day of the week, and point to the place where your garden was, which was always so much better kept than mine. So was Miss Esmond's chest of drawers a model of neatness, whilst mine were in a sad condition. Do you remember how we used to tell stories in the dormitory, and Madame Hibou, the French governess, would come out of bed and interrupt us with her *hooting*? Have you forgot the poor dancing-master, who told us he had been waylaid by assassins, but who was beaten, it appears, by my lord your brother's footmen? My dear, your cousin, the Lady Maria Esmond (her papa was, I think, but Viscount Castlewood in those times), has just been on a visit to this house, where you may be sure I did not recall those sad times to her remembrance, about which I am now chattering to Mrs. Esmond.

"Her ladyship has been staying here, and another relative of yours, the Baroness of Bernstein, and the two ladies are both gone on to Tunbridge Wells; but another and dearer relative still remains in my house, and is sound asleep, I trust, in the very next room, and the name of this gentleman is Mr. Henry Esmond Warrington. Now, do you understand how you come to hear from an old friend? Do not be alarmed, dear Madam! I know you are thinking at this moment, 'My



WELCOME

boy is ill. That is why Miss Molly Benson writes to me.' No, my dear; Mr. Warrington *was* ill yesterday, but to-day he is very comfortable; and our Doctor, who is no less a person than my dear husband, Colonel Lambert, has blooded him, has set his shoulder, which was dislocated, and pronounces that in two days more Mr. Warrington will be quite ready to take the road.

"I fear I and my girls are sorry that he is so soon to be well. Yesterday evening, as we were at tea, there came a great ringing at our gate, which disturbed us all, as the bell very seldom sounds in this quiet place, unless a passing beggar pulls it for charity; and the servants, running out, returned with the news, that a young gentleman, who had a fall from his horse, was lying lifeless on the road, surrounded by the friends in whose company he was travelling. At this, my Colonel (who is sure the most Samaritan of men!) hastens away, to see how he can serve the fallen traveller, and presently, with the aid of the servants, and followed by two ladies, brings into the house such a pale, lifeless, beautiful, young man! Ah, my dear, how I rejoice to think that your child has found shelter and succour under my roof! that my husband has saved him from pain and fever, and has been the means of restoring him to you and health! We shall be friends again now, shall we not? I was very ill last year, and 'twas even thought I should die. Do you know, that I often thought of you then, and how you had parted from me in anger so many years ago? I began then a foolish note to you, which I was too sick to finish, to tell you that if I went the way appointed for us all, I should wish to leave the world in charity with every single being I had known in it.

"Your cousin, the Right Honourable Lady Maria Esmond, showed a great deal of maternal tenderness and concern for her young kinsman after his accident. I am sure she hath a kind heart. The Baroness de Bernstein, who is of an advanced age, could not be expected to feel so keenly as *we young people*; but was, nevertheless, very much moved and interested until Mr. Warrington was restored to consciousness, when she said she was anxious to get on towards Tunbridge, whither she was bound, and was afraid of all things to lie in a place where there was no doctor at hand. *My* Æsculapius laughingly said, he would not offer to attend upon a lady of quality, though he would answer for his young patient. Indeed, the Colonel, during his campaigns, has had plenty of practice in accidents of this nature, and I am certain, were we to call in all the faculty for twenty miles round, Mr. Warrington could get no better treatment. So, leaving the young gentleman to the care of me and my daughters, the Baroness and her ladyship took their leave of us, the latter very loth to go. When he is well enough, my Colonel will ride with him as far as Westerham, but *on his own horses*, where an old army-comrade of Mr. Lambert's resides. And as this letter will not take the post for Falmouth until, by God's blessing, your son is well and perfectly restored, you need be under no sort of alarm for him whilst under the roof of,

"Madam,
"Your affectionate humble servant,
"MARY LAMBERT.

"P.S. Thursday. ,, ,, ?

"I am glad to hear (Mr. Warrington's coloured gentleman hath informed our people of the *gratifying circumstance*) that Providence hath blessed Mrs. Esmond with *such vast wealth*, and with an heir so likely to do credit to it. Our present means are amply sufficient, but will be small when divided amongst our survivors. Ah, dear Madam! I have heard of your calamity of last year. Though the Colonel and I have reared many children (five), we have lost two, and *a mother's heart* can feel for yours! I own to you, mine yearned to your boy to-day, when (in a manner *inexpressibly affecting* to me and Mr. Lambert) he mentioned his dear brother. 'Tis impossible to see your son, and not to love and regard him. I am thankful that it has been our lot to succour him in his trouble, and that in receiving the stranger within our gates, we should be giving hospitality to the son of an old friend."

Nature has written a letter of credit upon some men's faces, which is honoured almost wherever presented. Harry Warrington's countenance was so stamped in his youth. His eyes were so bright, his cheek so red and healthy, his look so frank and open, that almost all who beheld him, nay, even those who cheated him, trusted him. Nevertheless, as we have hinted, the lad was by no means the artless stripling he seemed to be. He was knowing enough with all his blushing cheeks; perhaps more wily and wary than he grew to be in after-age. Sure, a shrewd and generous man (who has led an honest life and has no secret blushes for his conscience) grows simpler as he grows older; arrives at his sum of right by more rapid processes of calculation; learns to eliminate false arguments more readily, and hits the mark of truth with less previous trouble of aiming, and disturbance of mind. Or is it only a senile delusion, that some of our vanities are cured with our growing years, and that we become more just in our perceptions of our own and our neighbours' shortcomings? . . . I would humbly suggest that young people, though they look prettier, have larger eyes, and not near so many wrinkles about their eyelids, are often as artful as some of their elders. What little monsters of cunning your frank schoolboys are! How they cheat mamma! how they hoodwink papa! how they humbug the housekeeper! how they cringe to the big boy for whom they fag at school! what a long lie and five years' hypocrisy and flattery is their conduct towards Dr. Birch! And the little boys' sisters? Are they any better, and is it only after they come out in the world that the little darlings learn a trick or two?

You may see, by the above letter of Mrs. Lambert, that she, like all good women, (and, indeed, almost all bad women,) was a sentimental person; and as she looked at Harry Warrington laid in her best bed, after the Colonel had bled him and clapped in his shoulder, as holding by her husband's hand she beheld the lad in a sweet slumber, murmuring a faint inarticulate word or two in his sleep, a faint blush quivering on his cheek, she owned he was a pretty lad indeed, and confessed with a sort of compunction that neither of her two boys—Jack who was at Oxford, and Charles who was just gone back to school after the Bartlemytide holidays—was half so handsome as the Virginian. What a good figure the boy had, and when papa bled him, his arm was as white as any lady's!

"Yes, as you say, Jack might have been as handsome but for the small-pox: and as for Charley——" "Always took after his papa, my dear Molly," said the Colonel, looking at his own honest face in a little looking-glass with a cut border and a japanned frame, by which the chief guests of the worthy gentleman and lady had surveyed their patches and powder, or shaved their hospitable beards.

"*Did* I say so, my love?" whispered Mrs. Lambert, looking rather scared.

"No; but you thought so, Mrs. Lambert."

"How can you tell one's thoughts so, Martin?" asks the lady.

"Because I am a conjuror, and because you tell them yourself, my dear," answered her husband. "Don't be frightened: he won't wake after that draught I gave him. Because you never see a young fellow but you are comparing him with your own. Because you never hear of one but you are thinking which of our girls he shall fall in love with and marry."

"Don't be foolish, sir," says the lady, putting a hand up to the Colonel's lips. They have softly trodden out of their guest's bedchamber by this time, and are in the adjoining dressing-closet, a snug little wainscoted room looking over gardens, with India curtains, more Japan chests and cabinets, a treasure of china, and a most refreshing odour of fresh lavender.

"You can't deny it, Mrs. Lambert," the Colonel resumes; "as you were looking at the young gentleman just now, you were thinking to yourself which of my girls will he marry? Shall it be Theo, or shall it be Hester? And then you thought of Lucy who was at boarding-school."

"There is no keeping anything from you, Martin Lambert," sighs the wife.

"There is no keeping it out of your eyes, my dear. What is this burning desire all you women have for selling and marrying your daughters? We men don't wish to part with 'em. I am sure, for my part, I should not like yonder young fellow half as well if I thought he intended to carry one of my darlings away with him."

"Sure, Martin, I have been so happy myself," says the fond wife and mother, looking at her husband with her very best eyes, "that I must wish my girls to do as I have done, and be happy, too!"

"Then you think good husbands are common, Mrs. Lambert, and that you may walk any day into the road before the house and find one shot out at the gate like a sack of coals?"

"Wasn't it providential, sir, that this young gentleman should be thrown over his horse's head at our very gate, and that he should turn out to be the son of my old schoolfellow and friend?" asked the wife. "There is something more than accident in such cases, depend upon that, Mr. Lambert!"

"And this was the stranger you saw in the candle three nights running, I suppose?"

"And in the fire, too, sir; twice a coal jumped out close by Theo. You may sneer, sir, but these things are *not* to be despised. Did I not see you distinctly coming back from Minorca, and dream of you at the very day and hour when you were wounded in Scotland?"

"How many times have you seen me wounded, when I had not a scratch, my dear? How many times have you seen me ill when I had no sort of hurt? You are always prophesying, and 'twere very hard on you if you were not sometimes right. Come! Let us leave our guest asleep comfortably, and go down and give the girls their French lesson."

So saying, the honest gentleman put his wife's arm under his, and they descended together the broad oak staircase of the comfortable old hall, round which hung the effigies of many foregone Lamberts, worthy magistrates, soldiers, country gentlemen, as was the Colonel whose acquaintance we have just made. The Colonel was a gentleman of pleasant, waggish humour. The French lesson which he and his daughters conned together was a scene out of Monsieur Molière's comedy of "Tartuffe," and papa was pleased to be very facetious with Miss Theo, by calling her Madam, and by treating her with a great deal of mock respect and ceremony. The girls read together with their father a scene or two of his favourite author (nor were they less modest in those days, though their tongues were a little more free), and papa was particularly arch and funny as he read from Orgon's part in that celebrated play:

ORGON. Or sus, nous voilà bien. J'ai, Mariane, en vous
Reconnu de tout temps un esprit assez doux,
Et de tout temps aussi vous m'avez été chère.
MARIANE. Je suis fort redevable à cet amour de père.
ORGON. Fort bien. Que dites-vous de Tartuffe notre hôte?
MARIANE. Qui? Moi?
ORGON. Vous. Voyez bien comme vous répondrez.
MARIANE. Hélas! J'en dirai, moi, tout ce que vous voudrez!
(*Mademoiselle Mariane laughs and blushes in spite of herself, whilst reading this line.*)
ORGON. C'est parler sagement. Dites moi donc, ma fille,
Qu'en toute sa personne un haut mérite brille,
Qu'il touche votre cœur, et qu'il vous seroit doux
De le voir par mon choix devenir votre époux!

"Have we not read the scene prettily, Elmire?" says the Colonel, laughing, and turning round to his wife.

Elmira prodigiously admired Orgon's reading, and so did his daughters, and almost everything besides which Mr. Lambert said or did. Canst thou, O friendly reader, count upon the fidelity of an artless and tender heart or two, and reckon among the blessings which heaven hath bestowed on thee the love of faithful women? Purify thine own heart, and try to make it worthy theirs. On thy knees, on thy knees, give thanks for the blessing awarded thee! All the prizes of life are nothing compared to that one. All the rewards of ambition, wealth, pleasure, only vanity and disappointment—grasped at greedily and fought for fiercely, and, over and over again, found worthless by the weary winners. But love seems to survive life, and to reach beyond it. I think we take it with us past the grave. Do we not still give it to those who have left us? May we not hope that they feel it for us, and that we shall leave it here in one or two fond bosoms, when we also are gone?

And whence, or how, or why, pray, this sermon? You see I know more about this Lambert family than you do to whom I am just presenting them: as how should you who never heard of them before? You may not like my friends; very few people do like strangers to whom they are presented with an outrageous flourish of praises on the part of the introducer. You say (quite naturally) what? Is this all? Are these the people he is so fond of? Why, the girl's not a beauty—the mother is good-natured, and may have been good-looking once, but she has no trace of it now—and, as for the father, he is quite an ordinary man. Granted: but don't you acknowledge that the sight of an honest man, with an honest, loving wife by his side, and surrounded by loving and obedient children, presents something very sweet and affecting to you? If you are made acquainted with such a person, and see the eager kindness of the fond faces round about him, and that pleasant confidence and affection which beams from his own, do you mean to say you are not touched and gratified? If you happen to stay in such a man's house, and at morning or evening see him and his children and domestics gathered together in a certain name, do you not join humbly in the petitions of those servants, and close them with a reverend Amen? That first night of his stay at Oakhurst, Harry Warrington, who had had a sleeping potion, and was awake sometimes rather feverish, thought he heard the evening hymn, and that his dearest brother George was singing it at home, in which delusion the patient went off again to sleep.

CHAPTER XXII.

IN HOSPITAL.

SINKING into a sweet slumber, and lulled by those harmonious sounds, our young patient passed a night of pleasant unconsciousness, and awoke in the morning to find a summer sun streaming in at the window, and his kind host and hostess smiling at his bed-curtains. He was ravenously hungry, and his doctor permitted him straightway to partake of a mess of chicken, which the doctor's wife told him had been prepared by the hands of one of her daughters.

One of her daughters? A faint image of a young person—of two young persons—with red cheeks and black waving locks, smiling round his couch, and suddenly departing thence, soon after he had come to himself, arose in the young man's mind. Then, then, there returned the remembrance of a female—lovely, it is true, but more elderly—certainly considerably older—and with f——. O horror and remorse! He writhed with anguish, as a certain recollection crossed him. An immense gulph of time gaped between him and the past. How long was it since he had heard that those pearls were artificial,—that those golden locks were only pinchbeck? A long, long time ago, when he was a boy, an innocent boy. Now he was a man,—quite an old man. He had been bled copiously; he had a little fever; he had had nothing to eat for very many hours; he had had a sleeping-draught, and a long, deep slumber after.

"What is it, my dear child?" cries kind Mrs. Lambert, as he started.

"Nothing, Madam; a twinge in my shoulder," said the lad. "I speak to my host and hostess? Sure you have been very kind to me."

"We are old friends, Mr. Warrington. My husband, Colonel Lambert, knew your father, and I and your mamma were school-girls together at Kensington. You were no stranger to us when your aunt and cousin told us who you were."

"Are they here?" asked Harry, looking a little blank.

"They must have lain at Tunbridge Wells last night. They sent a horseman from Reigate yesterday for news of you."

"Ah! I remember," says Harry, looking at his bandaged arm.

"I have made a good cure of you, Mr. Warrington. And now Mrs. Lambert and the cook must take charge of you."

"Nay. Theo prepared the chicken and rice, Mr. Lambert," said the lady. "Will Mr. Warrington get up after he has had his breakfast? We will send your valet to you."

"If howling proves fidelity, your man must be a most fond, attached creature," says Mr. Lambert.

"He let your baggage travel off after all in your aunt's carriage," said Mrs. Lambert. "You must wear my husband's linen, which, I dare say, is not so fine as yours."

"Pish, my dear! my shirts are good shirts enough for any Christian," cries the Colonel.

"They are Theo's and Hester's work," says mamma. At which her husband arches his eyebrows and looks at her. "And Theo hath ripped and sewed your sleeve to make it quite comfortable for your shoulder," the lady added.

"What beautiful roses!" cries Harry, looking at a fine china vase full of them that stood on the toilet-table, under the japan-framed glass.

"My daughter, Theo, cut them this morning. Well, Mr. Lambert? She *did* cut them!"

I suppose the Colonel was thinking that his wife introduced Theo too much into the conversation, and trod on Mrs. Lambert's slipper, or pulled her robe, or otherwise nudged her into a sense of propriety.

"And I fancied I heard some one singing the Evening Hymn very sweetly last night—or was it only a dream?" asked the young patient.

"Theo again, Mr. Warrington!" said the Colonel, laughing. "My servants said your negro man began to sing it in the kitchen as if he was a church organ."

"Our people sing it at home, sir. My grandpapa used to love it very much. His wife's father was a great friend of good Bishop Ken who wrote it; and—and my dear brother used to love it too," said the boy, his voice dropping.

It was then, I suppose, that Mrs. Lambert felt inclined to give the boy a kiss. His little accident, illness and recovery, the kindness of the people round about him, had softened Harry Warrington's heart, and opened it to better influences than those which had been brought to bear on it for some six weeks past. He was breathing a purer air than that tainted atmosphere of selfishness, and worldliness, and corruption, into which he had been plunged since his arrival in England. Sometimes the young man's fate, or choice, or weakness, leads him into the fellowship of the giddy and vain; happy he, whose lot makes him acquainted with the wiser company, whose lamps are trimmed, and whose pure hearts keep modest watch.

The pleased matron left her young patient devouring Miss Theo's mess of rice and chicken, and the Colonel seated by the lad's bedside. Gratitude to his hospitable entertainers, and contentment after a comfortable meal, caused in Mr. Warrington a very pleasant condition ot mind and body. He was ready to talk now more freely than usually was his custom; for, unless excited by a strong interest or emotion, the young man was commonly taciturn and cautious in his converse with his fellows, and was by no means of an imaginative turn. Of books our youth had been but a very remiss student, nor were his remarks on such simple works as he had read very profound or valuable; but regarding dogs, horses, and the ordinary business of life, he was a far better critic; and, with any person interested in such subjects, conversed on them freely enough.

Harry's host, who had considerable shrewdness, and experience of books, and cattle, and men, was pretty soon able to take the measure of his young guest in the talk which they now had together. It was now, for the first time, the Virginian learned that Mrs. Lambert had been an early friend of his mother's, and that the Colonel's own father had served with Harry's grandfather, Colonel Esmond, in the famous wars of Queen Anne. He found himself in a friend's country. He was soon at ease with his honest host, whose manners were quite simple and cordial, and who looked and seemed perfectly a gentleman, though he wore a plain fustian coat, and a waistcoat without a particle of lace.

"My boys are both away," said Harry's host, "or they would have shown you the country when you got up, Mr. Warrington. Now you can only have the company of my wife and her daughters. Mrs. Lambert hath told you already about one of them, Theo, our eldest, who made your broth, who cut your roses, and who mended your coat. She is not such a wonder as her mother imagines her to be ; but little Theo is a smart little housekeeper, and a very good and cheerful lass, though her father says it."

"It is very kind of Miss Lambert to take so much care for me," says the young patient.

"She is no kinder to you than to any other mortal, and doth but her duty." Here the Colonel smiled. "I laugh at their mother for praising our children," he said, "and I think I am as foolish about them myself. The truth is, God hath given us very good and dutiful children, and I see no reason why I should disguise my thankfulness for such a blessing. You have never a sister, I think?"

"No, sir, I am alone now," Mr. Warrington said.

"Ay, truly, I ask your pardon for my thoughtlessness. Your man hath told our people what befel last year. I served with Braddock in Scotland ; and hope he mended before he died. A wild fellow, sir, but there was a fund of truth about the man, and no little kindness under his rough swaggering manner. Your black fellow talks very freely about his master and his affairs. I suppose you permit him these freedoms as he rescued you——"

"Rescued *me?*" cries Mr. Warrington.

"From ever so many Indians on that very expedition. My Molly and I did not know we were going to entertain so prodigiously wealthy a gentleman. He saith that half Virginia belongs to you; but if the whole of North America were yours, we could but give you our best."

"Those negro boys, sir, lie like the father of all lies. They think it is for our honour to represent us as ten times as rich as we are. My mother has what would be a vast estate in England, and is a very good one at home. We are as well off as most of our neighbours, sir, but no better; and all our splendour is in Mr. Gumbo's foolish imagination. He never rescued me from an Indian in his life, and would run away at the sight of one, as my poor brother's boy did on that fatal day when he fell."

"The bravest man will do so at unlucky times," said the Colonel. "I myself saw the best troops in the world run at Preston, before a ragged mob of Highland savages."

"That was because the Highlanders fought for a good cause, sir."

"Do you think," asks Harry's host, "that the French Indians had the good cause in the fight of last year?"

"The scoundrels! I would have the scalp of every murderous redskin among 'em!" cried Harry, clenching his fist. "They were robbing and invading the British territories, too. But the Highlanders were fighting for their king."

"We, on our side, were fighting for *our* king; and we ended by winning the battle," said the Colonel, laughing.

"Ah!" cried Harry, "if his Royal Highness the Prince had not turned back at Derby, your king and mine, now, would be his Majesty King James the Third!"

"Who made such a Tory of you, Mr. Warrington?" asked Lambert.

"Nay, sir, the Esmonds were always loyal!" answered the youth. "Had we lived at home, and twenty years sooner, brother and I often and often agreed that our heads would have been in danger. We certainly would have staked them for the king's cause."

"Yours is better on your shoulders than on a pole at Temple Bar. I have seen them there, and they don't look very pleasant, Mr. Warrington."

"I shall take off my hat, and salute them, whenever I pass the gate," cried the young man, "if the king and the whole court are standing by!"

"I doubt whether your relative, my Lord Castlewood, is as staunch a supporter of the king over the water," said Colonel

Lambert, smiling: "or your aunt, the Baroness of Bernstein, who left you in our charge. Whatever her old partialities may have been, she has repented of them; she has rallied to our side, landed her nephews in the Household, and looks to find a suitable match for her nieces. If you have Tory opinions, Mr. Warrington, take an old soldier's advice, and keep them to yourself."

"Why, sir, I do not think that you will betray me!" said the boy.

"Not I, but others might. You did not talk in this way at Castlewood? I mean the old Castlewood which you have just come from."

"I might be safe amongst my own kinsmen, surely, sir!" cried Harry.

"Doubtless. I would not say no. But a man's own kinsmen can play him slippery tricks at times, and he finds himself none the better for trusting them. I mean no offence to you or any of your family; but lacqueys have ears as well as their masters, and they carry about all sorts of stories. For instance, your black fellow is ready to tell all he knows about you, and a great deal more besides, as it would appear."

"Hath he told about the broken-knee'd horse?" cried out Harry, turning very red.

"To say truth, my groom seemed to know something of the story, and said it was a shame a gentleman should sell another such a brute; let alone a cousin. I am not here to play the Mentor to you, or to carry about servants' tittle-tattle. When you have seen more of your cousins, you will form your own opinion of them; meanwhile, take an old soldier's advice, I say again, and be cautious with whom you deal, and what you say."

Very soon after this little colloquy, Mr. Lambert's guest rose, with the assistance of Gumbo, his valet, to whom he, for a hundredth time at least, promised a sound caning if ever he should hear that Gumbo had ventured to talk about his affairs again in the servants'-hall,—which prohibition Gumbo solemnly vowed and declared he would for ever obey; but I dare say he was chattering the whole of the Castlewood secrets to his new friends of Colonel Lambert's kitchen; for Harry's hostess certainly heard a number of stories concerning him which she could not prevent her housekeeper from telling; though of course I would not accuse that worthy lady, or any of her sex or ours, of undue curiosity regarding their neighbours' affairs. But how can you prevent servants talking, or listening when the faithful attached creatures talk to you?

Mr. Lambert's house stood on the outskirts of the little town of Oakhurst, which, if he but travels in the right direction, the patient reader will find on the road between Farnham and Reigate,—and Madame Bernstein's servants naturally pulled at the first bell at hand, when the young Virginian met with his mishap. A few hundred yards further, was the long street of the little old town, where hospitality might have been found under the great swinging ensigns of a couple of inns, and medical relief was to be had, as a blazing gilt pestle and mortar indicated. But what surgeon could have ministered more cleverly to a patient than Harry's host, who tended him without a fee, or what Boniface could make him more comfortably welcome?

Two tall gates, each surmounted by a couple of heraldic monsters, led from the high-road up to a neat, broad stone terrace, whereon stood Oakhurst House: a square brick building, with windows faced with stone, and many high chimneys, and a tall roof surmounted by a fair balustrade. Behind the house stretched a large garden, where there was plenty of room for cabbages as well as roses to grow; and before the mansion, separated from it by the high-road, was a field of many acres, where the Colonel's cows and horses were at grass. Over the centre window was a carved shield supported by the same monsters who pranced or ramped upon the entrance-gates; and a coronet over the shield. The fact is, that the house had been originally the jointure-house of Oakhurst Castle, which stood hard by,—its chimneys and turrets appearing over the surrounding woods, now bronzed with the darkest foliage of summer. Mr. Lambert's was the greatest house in Oakhurst town; but the Castle was of more importance than all the town put together. The Castle and the jointure-house had been friends of many years' date. Their fathers had fought side by side in Queen Anne's wars. There were two small pieces of ordnance on the terrace of the jointure-house, and six before the Castle, which had been taken out of the same privateer, which Mr. Lambert and his kinsman and commander, Lord Wrotham, had brought into Harwich in one of their voyages home from Flanders with despatches from the Great Duke.

His toilet completed with Mr. Gumbo's aid, his fair hair neatly dressed by that artist, and his open ribboned sleeve and wounded shoulder supported by a handkerchief which hung from his neck, Harry Warrington made his way out of his sick chamber, preceded by his kind host, who led him first down a broad oak stair, round which hung many pikes and muskets of ancient shape, and so into a square marble paved room, from which the living-rooms of the house branched off. There were more arms in this hall—pikes and halberts of ancient date, pistols and jack-boots of more than a century old, that had done service in Cromwell's wars, a tattered French guidon which had been borne by a French gendarme at Malplaquet, and a pair of cumbrous Highland broadswords, which, having been carried as far as Derby, had been flung away on the fatal field of Culloden. Here were breastplates and black morions of Oliver's troopers, and portraits of stern warriors in buff jerkins and plain bands and short hair. "They fought against your grandfathers and King Charles, Mr. Warrington," said Harry's host. "I don't hide that. They rode to join the Prince of Orange at Exeter. We were Whigs, young gentleman, and something more. John Lambert, the Major-General, was a kinsman of our house, and we were all more or less partial to short hair and long sermons. You do not seem to like either?" Indeed, Harry's face manifested signs of anything but pleasure whilst he examined the portraits of the Parliamentary heroes. "Be not alarmed, we are very good churchmen now. My eldest son will be in orders ere long. He is now travelling as governor to my Lord Wrotham's son in Italy, and as for our women, they are all for the Church, and carry me with 'em. Every woman is a Tory at heart. Mr. Pope says a rake, but I think t'other is the more charitable word. Come, let us go see them." And flinging open the dark oak door, Colonel Lambert led his young guest into the parlour where the ladies were assembled.

"Here is Miss Hester," said the Colonel, "and this is Miss Theo, the soup-maker, the tailoress, the harpsichord player, and the songstress, who set you to sleep last night. Make a curtsey to the gentleman, young ladies! Oh, I forgot, and Theo is the mistress of the roses which you admired a short while since in your bedroom. I think she has kept some of them in her cheeks."

In fact, Miss Theo was making a profound curtsey and blushing most modestly as her papa spoke. I am not going to describe her person,—though we shall see a great deal of her in the course of this history. She was not a particular beauty. Harry Warrington was not over head and ears in love with her at an instant's warning, and faithless to—to that other individual with whom, as we have seen, the youth had lately been smitten. Miss Theo had kind eyes and a sweet voice; a ruddy freckled cheek and a round white neck, on which, out of a little cap such as misses wore in those times, fell rich curling clusters of dark brown hair. She was not a delicate or sentimental-looking person. Her arms, which were worn bare from the elbow like other ladies' arms in those days, were very jolly and red. Her feet were not so miraculously small but that you could see them without a telescope. There was nothing waspish about her waist. This young person was sixteen years of age, and looked older. I don't know what call she had to blush so when she made her curtsey to the stranger. It was such a deep ceremonial curtsey as you never see at present. She and her sister both made these "cheeses" in compliment to the new comer, and with much stately agility.

As Miss Theo rose up out of this salute, her papa tapped her under the chin (which was of the double sort of chins), and laughingly hummed out the line which he had read the day before. "*Eh bien! que dites-vous, ma fille, de notre hôte?*"

"Nonsense, Mr. Lambert!" cries mamma.

"Nonsense is sometimes the best kind of sense in the world," said Colonel Lambert. His guest looked puzzled.

"Are you fond of nonsense?" the Colonel continued to Harry, seeing by the boy's face that the latter had no great love or comprehension of his favourite humour. "We consume a vast deal of it in this house. Rabelais is my favourite reading. My wife is all for Mr. Fielding and Theophrastus. I think Theo prefers Tom Brown, and Mrs. Hetty here loves Dean Swift."

"Our papa is talking what *he* loves," says Miss Hetty.

"And what is that, Miss?" asks the father of his second daughter.

"Sure, sir, you said yourself it was nonsense," answers the young lady, with a saucy toss of her head.

"Which of them do you like best, Mr. Warrington?" asked the honest Colonel.

"Which of whom, sir?"

"The Curate of Meudon, or the Dean of St. Patrick's, or honest Tom, or Mr. Fielding?"

"And what were they, sir?"

"They! Why, they wrote books."

"Indeed, sir. I never heard of either one of 'em," said Harry, hanging down his head. "I fear my book learning was neglected at home, sir. My brother had read every book that ever was wrote, I think. He could have talked to you about 'em for hours together."

With this little speech Mrs. Lambert's eyes turned to her daughter, and Miss Theo cast hers down and blushed.

"Never mind, honesty is better than books any day, Mr. Warrington!" cried the jolly Colonel. "You may go through the world very honourably without reading any of the books I have been talking of, and some of them might give you more pleasure than profit."

"I know more about horses and dogs than Greek and Latin, sir. We most of us do in Virginia," said Mr. Warrington.

"You are like the Persians; you can ride and speak the truth."

"Are the Prussians very good on horseback, sir? I hope I shall see their king and a campaign or two, either with 'em or against 'em," remarked Colonel Lambert's guest. Why did Miss Theo look at her mother, and why did that good woman's face assume a sad expression?

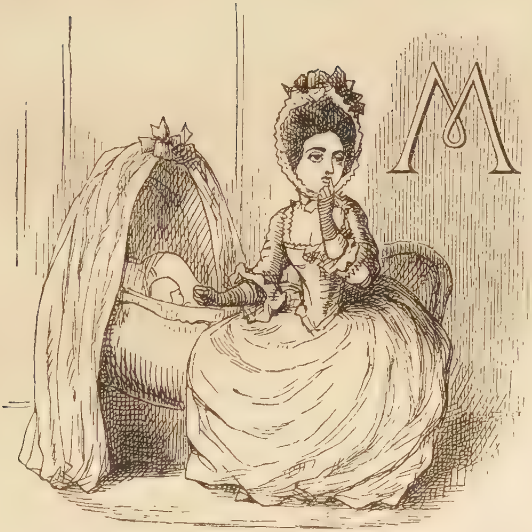
Why? Because young lasses are bred in humdrum country towns, do you suppose they never indulge in romances? Because they are modest and have never quitted mother's apron, do you suppose they have no thoughts of their own? What happens in spite of all those precautions which the King and Queen take for their darling princess, those dragons, and that impenetrable forest, and that castle of steel? The fairy prince penetrates the impenetrable forest, finds the weak point in the dragon's scale armour, and gets the better of all the ogres who guard the castle of steel. Away goes the princess to him. She knew him at once. Her band-boxes and portmanteaux are filled with her best clothes and all her jewels. She has been ready ever so long.

That is in fairy tales, you understand—where the blessed hour and youth always arrive, the ivory horn is blown at the castle-gate; and far off in her beauteous bower the princess hears it, and starts up, and knows that there is the right champion. He is always ready. Look! how the giants' heads tumble off as, falchion in hand, he gallops over the bridge on his white charger! How should that virgin, locked up in that inaccessible fortress, where she has never seen any man that was not eighty, or hump-backed, or her father, know that there were such beings in the world as young men? I suppose there's an instinct. I suppose there's a season. I never spoke for my part to a fairy princess, or heard as much from any unenchanted or enchanting maiden. Ne'er a one of them has ever whispered her pretty little secrets to me, or perhaps confessed them to herself, her mamma, or her nearest and dearest confidante. But they *will* fall in love. Their little hearts are constantly throbbing at the window of expectancy on the look-out for the champion. They are always hearing his horn. They are for ever on the tower looking out for the hero. Sister Ann, Sister Ann, do you see him? Surely 'tis a knight with curling moustaches, a flashing scimitar, and a suit of silver armour. Oh, no! it is only a costermonger with his donkey and a pannier of cabbage! Sister Ann, Sister Ann, what is that cloud of dust? Oh, it is only a farmer's man driving a flock of pigs from market. Sister Ann, Sister Ann, who is that splendid warrior advancing in scarlet and gold? He nears the castle, he clears the drawbridge, he lifts the ponderous hammer at the gate. Ah me, he knocks twice! 'Tis only the postman with a double letter from Northamptonshire! So it is we make false starts in life. I don't believe there is any such thing known as first love—not within man's or woman's memory. No male or female remembers his or her first inclination any more than his or her own christening. What? You fancy that your sweet mistress, your spotless spinster, your blank maiden just out of the school-room, never cared for any but you? And she tells you so? Oh, you idiot! When she was four years old she had a tender feeling towards the Buttons who brought the coals up to the nursery, or the little sweep at the crossing, or the music-master, or never mind whom. She had a secret longing towards her brother's schoolfellow, or the third charity boy at church, and if occasion had served, the comedy enacted with you had been performed along with another. I do not mean to say that she confessed this amatory sentiment, but that she had it. Lay down this page, and think how many and many and many a time you were in love before you selected the present Mrs. Jones as the partner of your name and affections!

So, from the way in which Theo held her head down, and exchanged looks with her mother, when poor unconscious Harry called the Persians the Prussians, and talked of serving a campaign with them, I make no doubt she was feeling ashamed, and thinking within herself, "Is this the hero with whom my mamma and I have been in love for these twenty-four hours, and whom we have endowed with every perfection? How beautiful, pale, and graceful he looked yesterday as he lay on the ground! How his curls fell over his face! How sad it was to see his poor white arm, and the blood trickling from it when papa bled him! And now he is well and amongst us, he is handsome certainly, but oh, is it possible he is —he is stupid?" When she lighted the lamp and looked at him, did Psyche find Cupid out; and is that the meaning of the old allegory? The wings of love drop off at this discovery. The fancy can no more soar and disport in skiey regions, the beloved object ceases at once to be celestial, and remains plodding on earth, entirely unromantic and substantial.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HOLIDAYS.



MRS. LAMBERT'S little day-dream was over. Miss Theo and her mother were obliged to confess in their hearts that their hero was but an ordinary mortal. They uttered few words on the subject, but each knew the other's thoughts as people who love each other do; and mamma, by an extra tenderness and special caressing manner towards her daughter, sought to console her for her disappointment. "Never mind, my dear"—the maternal kiss whispered on the filial cheek—"our hero has turned out to be but an ordinary mortal, and none such is good enough for my Theo. Thou shalt have a real husband ere long, if there be one in England. Why, I was scarce fifteen when your father saw me at the Bury Assembly, and while I was yet at school, I used to vow that I never would have any other man. If heaven gave me such a husband—the best man in the whole kingdom—sure it will bless my child equally, who deserves a king, if she fancies him!" Indeed, I am not sure that Mrs. Lambert—who, of course, knew the age of the Prince of Wales, and was aware how handsome and good a young prince he was—did not expect that he too would come riding by her gate, and perhaps tumble down from his horse there, and be taken into the house, and be cured, and cause his royal grandpapa to give Martin Lambert a regiment, and fall in love with Theo.

The Colonel, for his part, and his second daughter Miss Hetty, were on the laughing, scornful, unbelieving side. Mamma was always match-making. Indeed, Mrs. Lambert was much addicted to novels, and cried her eyes out over them with great assiduity. No coach ever passed the gate, but she expected a husband for her girls would alight from it and ring the bell. As for Miss Hetty, she allowed her tongue to wag in a more than usually saucy way: she made a hundred sly allusions to their guest. She introduced Prussia and Persia into their conversation with abominable pertness and frequency. She asked whether the present King of Prussia was called the Shaw or the Sophy, and how far it was from Ispahan to Saxony, which his Majesty was at present invading, and about which war papa was so busy with his maps and his newspapers? She brought down the "Persian Tales" from her mamma's closet, and laid them slily on the table in the parlour where the family sat. *She* would not marry a Persian prince for her part; she would prefer a gentleman who might not have more than one wife at a time. She called our young Virginian Theo's gentleman, Theo's prince. She asked mamma if she wished her, Hetty, to take the other visitor, the black prince, for herself? Indeed, she rallied her sister and her mother unceasingly on their sentimentalities, and would never stop until she had made them angry, when she would begin to cry herself, and kiss them violently one after the other, and coax them back into good humour. Simple Harry Warrington, meanwhile, knew nothing of all the jokes, the tears, quarrels, reconciliations, hymeneal plans, and so forth, of which he was the innocent occasion. A hundred allusions to the Prussians and Persians were shot at him, and those Parthian arrows did not penetrate his hide at all. A Shaw? A Sophy? Very likely he thought a Sophy was a lady, and would have deemed it the height of absurdity that a man with a great black beard should have any such name. We fall into the midst of a quiet family: we drop like a stone, say, into a pool,—we are perfectly compact and cool, and little know the flutter and excitement we make there, disturbing the fish, frightening the ducks, and agitating the whole surface of the water. How should Harry know the effect which his sudden appearance produced in this little quiet sentimental family? He thought quite well enough of himself on many points, but was diffident as yet regarding women, being of that age when young gentlemen require encouragement and to be brought forward, and having been brought up at home in very modest and primitive relations towards the other sex. So Miss Hetty's jokes played round the lad, and he minded them no more than so many summer gnats. It was not that he was stupid, as she certainly thought him: he was simple, too much occupied with himself and his own private affairs to think of others. Why, what tragedies, comedies, interludes, intrigues, farces, are going on under our noses in friends' drawing-rooms where we visit every day, and we remain utterly ignorant, self-satisfied, and blind! As these sisters sat and combed their flowing ringlets of nights, or talked with each other in the great bed where, according to the fashion of the day, they lay together, how should Harry know that he had so great a share in their thoughts, jokes, conversation? Three days after his arrival, his new and hospitable friends were walking with him in my Lord Wrotham's fine park, where they were free to wander; and here, on a piece of water, they came to some swans, which the young ladies were in the habit of feeding with bread. As the birds approached the young women, Hetty said, with a queer look at her mother and sister, and then a glance at her father, who stood by, honest, happy, in a red waistcoat,—Hetty said: "Mamma's swans are something like these, papa."

"What swans, my dear?" says mamma.

"Something like, but not quite. They have shorter necks than these, and are, scores of them, on our common," continues Miss Hetty. "I saw Betty plucking one in the kitchen this morning. We shall have it for dinner, with apple-sauce and——"

"Don't be a little goose!" says Miss Theo.

"And sage and onions. Do you love swan, Mr. Warrington?"

"I shot three last winter on our river," said the Virginian gentleman. "Ours are not such white birds as these—they eat very well though." The simple youth had not the slightest idea that he himself was an allegory at that very time, and that Miss Hetty was narrating a fable regarding him. In some exceedingly recondite Latin work I have read that, long before Virginia was discovered, other folks were equally dull of comprehension.

So it was a premature sentiment on the part of Miss Theo—that little tender flutter of the bosom which we have acknowledged she felt on first beholding the Virginian, so handsome, pale, and bleeding. *This* was not the great passion which she knew her heart could feel. Like the birds, it had wakened and begun to sing at a false dawn. Hop back to thy perch, and cover thy head with thy wing, thou tremulous little fluttering creature! It is not yet light, and roosting is as yet better than singing. Anon will come morning, and the whole sky will redden, and you shall soar up into it and salute the sun with your music.

One little phrase, some three-and-thirty lines back, perhaps the fair and suspicious reader has remarked: "*Three days after his arrival*, Harry was walking with," &c. &c. If he could walk—which it appeared he could do perfectly well—what business had he to be walking with anybody but Lady Maria Esmond on the Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells? His shoulder was set: his health was entirely restored: he had not even a change of coats, as we have seen, and was obliged to the Colonel for his raiment. Surely a young man in such a condition had no right to be lingering on at Oakhurst, and was bound by every tie of duty and convenience, by love, by relationship, by a gentle heart waiting for him, by the washerwoman finally, to go to Tunbridge. Why did he stay behind, unless he was in love with either of the young ladies? (and we say he wasn't.) Could it be that he did not want to go? Hath the gracious reader understood the meaning of the mystic S with which the last chapter commences and in which the designer has feebly endeavoured to depict the notorious Sindbad the Sailor surmounted by that odious old man of the sea? What if Harry Warrington should be that sailor, and his fate that choking, deadening, inevitable old man? What if for two days past he has felt those knees throttling him round the neck? if his fell aunt's purpose is answered, and if his late love is killed as dead by her poisonous communications as Fair Rosamond was by her royal and legitimate rival? Is Hero then lighting the lamp up, and getting ready the supper, whilst Leander is sitting comfortably with some other party, and never in the least thinking of taking to the water? Ever since that coward's blow was struck in Lady Maria's back by her own relative, surely kind hearts must pity her ladyship. I know she has faults—ay, and wears false hair and false never mind what. But a woman in distress, shall we not pity her—a lady of a certain age, are we going to laugh at her because of her years? Between her old aunt and her unhappy delusion, be sure my Lady Maria Esmond is having no very pleasant time of it at Tunbridge Wells. There is no one to protect her. Madam Beatrix has her all to herself. Lady Maria is poor, and hopes for money from her aunt. Lady Maria has a secret or two which the old woman knows, and brandishes over her. I for one am quite melted and grow soft-hearted as I think of her. Imagine her alone, and a victim to that old woman! Paint to yourself that antique Andromeda (if you please we will allow that rich flowing head of hair to fall over her shoulders) chained to a rock on Mount Ephraim, and given up to that dragon of a Baroness! Succour, Perseus! Come quickly with thy winged feet and flashing falchion! Perseus is not in the least hurry. The dragon has her will of Andromeda for day after day.

Harry Warrington, who would not have allowed his dislocated and mended shoulder to keep him from going out hunting, remained day after day contentedly at Oakhurst, with each day finding the kindly folks who welcomed him more to his liking. Perhaps he had never, since his grandfather's death, been in such good company. His lot had lain amongst fox-hunting Virginian squires, with whose society he had put up very contentedly, riding their horses, living their lives, and sharing their punch-bowls. The ladies of his own and mother's acquaintance were very well bred, and decorous, and pious, no doubt, but somewhat narrow-minded. It was but a little place, his home, with its pompous ways, small etiquettes and punctilios, small flatteries, small conversations and scandals. Until he had left the place some time after, he did not know how narrow and confined his life had been there. He was free enough personally. He had dogs and horses, and might shoot and hunt for scores of miles round about: but the little lady mother domineered at home, and when there he had to submit to her influence and breathe her air.

Here the lad found himself in the midst of a circle where everything about him was incomparably gayer, brighter, and more free. He was living with a man and woman who had seen the world, though they lived retired from it, who had both of them happened to enjoy from their earliest times the use not only of good books, but of good company—those live books, which are such pleasant and sometimes such profitable reading. Society has this good at least: that it lessens our conceit, by teaching us our insignificance, and making us acquainted with our betters. If you are a young person who read this, depend upon it, sir or madam, there is nothing more wholesome for you than to acknowledge and to associate with your superiors. If I could, I would not have my son Thomas first Greek and Latin prize boy, first oar, and cock of the school. Better for his soul's and body's welfare that he should have a good place, not the first—a fair set of competitors round about him, and a good thrashing now and then, with a hearty shake afterwards of the hand which administered the beating. What honest man that can choose his lot would be a prince, let us say, and have all society walking backwards before him, only obsequious household-gentlemen to talk to, and all mankind mum except when your High Mightiness asks a question and gives permission to speak? One of the great benefits which Harry Warrington received from this family, before whose gate Fate had shot him, was to begin to learn that he was a profoundly ignorant young fellow, and that there were many people in the world far better than he knew himself to be. Arrogant a little with some folks, in the company of his superiors he was magnanimously docile. We have seen how faithfully he admired his brother at home, and his friend, the gallant young Colonel of Mount Vernon: of the gentlemen his kinsmen at Castlewood, he had felt himself at least the equal. In his new acquaintance at Oakhurst he found a man who had read far more books than Harry could pretend to judge of, who had seen the world and come unwounded out of it, as he had out of the dangers and battles which he had confronted, and who had goodness and honesty written on his face and breathing from his lips, for which qualities our brave lad had always an instinctive sympathy and predilection.

As for the women, they were the kindest, merriest, most agreeable he had as yet known. They were pleasanter than Parson Broadbent's black-eyed daughter at home, whose laugh carried as far as a gun. They were quite as well-bred as the Castlewood ladies, with the exception of Madam Beatrix (who, indeed, was as grand as an empress on some occasions). But somehow, after a talk with Madam Beatrix, and vast amusement and interest in her stories, the lad would come away as with a bitter taste in his mouth, and fancy all the world wicked round about him. The Lamberts were not squeamish; and laughed over pages of Mr. Fielding, and cried over volumes of Mr. Richardson, containing jokes and incidents which would make

Mrs. Grundy's hair stand on end, yet their merry prattle left no bitterness behind it; their tales about this neighbour and that were droll, not malicious; the curtseys and salutations with which the folks of the little neighbouring town received them, how kindly and cheerful! their bounties how cordial! Of a truth it is good to be with good people. How good Harry Warrington did not know at the time, perhaps, or until subsequent experience showed him contrasts, or caused him to feel remorse. Here was a tranquil, sunshiny day of a life that was to be agitated and stormy—a happy hour or two to remember. Not much happened during the happy hour or two. It was only sweet sleep, pleasant waking, friendly welcome, serene pastime. The gates of the old house seemed to shut the wicked world out somehow, and the inhabitants within to be better, and purer, and kinder than other people. He was not in love. Oh, no! not the least, either with saucy Hetty or generous Theodosia: but when the time came for going away, he fastened on both their hands, and felt an immense regard for them. He thought he should like to know their brothers, and that they must be fine fellows; and as for Mrs. Lambert, I believe she was as sentimental at his departure as if he had been the last volume of Clarissa Harlowe.

"He is very kind and honest," said Theo, gravely, as, looking from the terrace, they saw him and their father and servants riding away on the road to Westerham.

"I don't think him stupid at all now," said little Hetty; "and, mamma, I think he is very like a swan indeed."

"It felt just like one of the boys going to school," said mamma.

"Just like it," said Theo, sadly.

"I am glad he has got papa to ride with him to Westerham," resumed Miss Hetty, "and that he bought Farmer Briggs's horse. I don't like his going to those Castlewood people. I am sure that Madame Bernstein is a wicked old woman. I expected to see her ride away on her crooked stick."

"Hush, Hetty!"

"Do you think she would float if they tried her in the pond as poor old Mother Hely did at Elmhurst? The other old woman seemed fond of him—I mean the one with the fair *tour*. She looked very melancholy when she went away; but Madame Bernstein whisked her off with her crutch, and she was obliged to go. I don't care, Theo. I *know* she is a wicked woman. You think everybody good, you do, because you never do anything wrong yourself."

"My Theo *is* a good girl," says the mother, looking fondly at both her daughters.

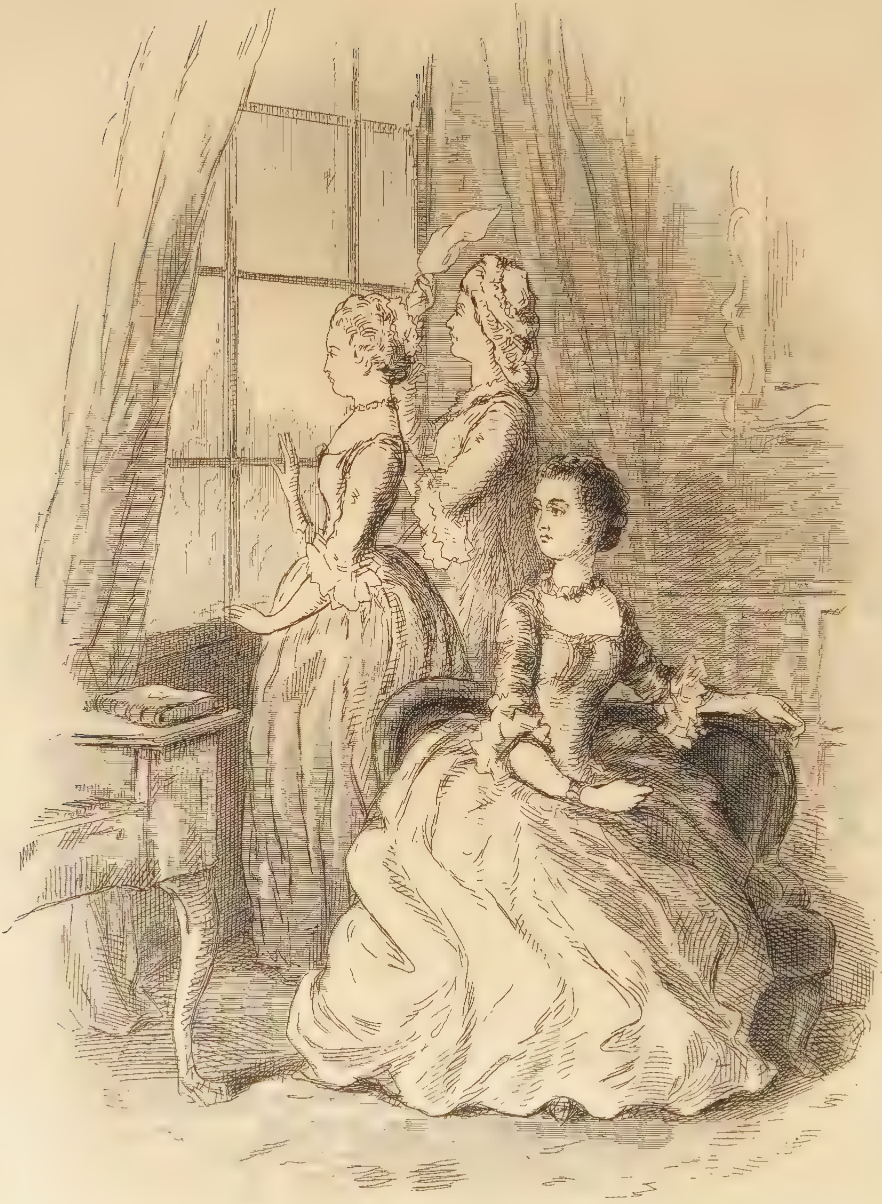
"Then why do we call her a miserable sinner?"

"We are all so, my love," said mamma.

"What, papa too? You know you don't think so," cries Miss Hester. And to allow this was almost more than Mrs. Lambert could afford.

"What was that you told John to give to Mr. Warrington's black man?"

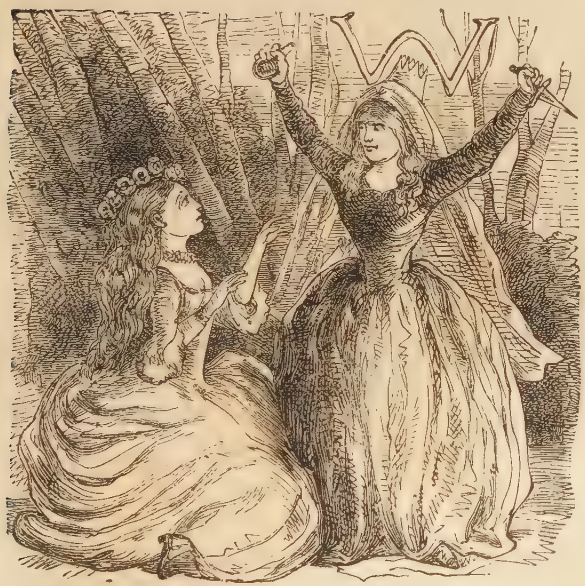
Mamma owned, with some shamefacedness, it was a bottle of her cordial water and a cake which she had bid Betty make. "I feel quite like a mother to him, my dears, I can't help owning it,—and you know both our boys still like one of our cakes to take to school or college with them."



FAREWELL.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FROM OAKHURST TO TUNBRIDGE.



WAVING her lily handkerchief in token of adieu to the departing travellers, Mrs. Lambert and her girls watched them pacing leisurely on the first few hundred yards of their journey, and until such time as a tree-clumped corner of the road hid them from the ladies' view. Behind that clump of limes the good matron had many a time watched those she loved best disappear. Husband departing to battle and danger, sons to school, each after the other had gone on his way behind yonder green trees, returning as it pleased heaven's will at his good time, and bringing pleasure and love back to the happy little family. Besides their own instinctive nature (which to be sure aids wonderfully in the matter), the leisure and contemplation attendant upon their home life serve to foster the tenderness and fidelity of our women. The men gone, there is all day to think about them, and to-morrow and to-morrow—when there certainly will be a letter—and so on. There is the vacant room to go look at, where the boy slept last night, and the impression of his carpet-bag is still on the bed. There is his whip hung up in the hall, and his fishing-rod and basket—mute memorials of the brief bygone pleasures. At dinner there comes up that cherry-tart, half of which our darling ate at two o'clock in spite of his melancholy, and with a choking little sister on each side of him. The evening prayer is said without that young scholar's voice to utter the due responses. Midnight and silence come, and the good mother lies wakeful, thinking how one of the dear accustomed brood is away from the nest. Morn breaks, home and holidays have passed away, and toil and labour have begun for him. So those rustling limes formed, as it were, a screen between the world and our ladies of the house at Oakhurst. Kind-hearted Mrs. Lambert always became silent and thoughtful, if by chance she and her girls walked up to the trees in the absence of the men of the family. She said she would like to carve their names upon the grey silvered trunks, in the midst of true-lovers' knots, as was then the kindly fashion; and Miss Theo, who had an exceeding elegant turn that way, made some verses regarding the trees, which her delighted parent transmitted to a periodical of those days.

"Now we are out of sight of the ladies," says Colonel Lambert, giving a parting salute with his hat, as the pair of gentlemen trotted past the limes in question. "I know my wife always watches at her window until we are round this corner. I hope we shall have you seeing the trees and the house again, Mr. Warrington; and the boys being at home, mayhap there will be better sport for you."

"I never want to be happier, sir, than I have been," replied Mr. Warrington; "and I hope you will let me say, that I feel as if I am leaving quite old friends behind me."

"The friend at whose house we shall sup to-night hath a son, who is an old friend of our family, too, and my wife, who is an inveterate marriage-monger, would have made a match between him and one of my girls, but that the Colonel hath chosen to fall in love with somebody else."

"Ah!" sighed Mr. Warrington.

"Other folks have done the same thing. There were brave fellows before Agamemnon."

"I beg your pardon, sir. Is the gentleman's name—Aga——? I did not quite gather it," meekly inquired the younger traveller.

"No, his name is James Wolfe," cried the Colonel, smiling.

"He is a young fellow still, or what we call so, being scarce thirty years old. He is the youngest lieutenant-colonel in the army, unless, to be sure, we except a few scores of our nobility, who take rank before us common folk."

"Of course, of course!" says the Colonel's young companion, with true colonial notions of aristocratic precedence.

"And I have seen him commanding captains, and very brave captains, who were thirty years his seniors, and who had neither his merit nor his good fortune. But, lucky as he hath been, no one envies his superiority, for, indeed, most of us acknowledge that he is our superior. He is beloved by every man of our old regiment, and knows every one of them. He is a good scholar as well as a consummate soldier, and a master of many languages."

"Ah, sir!" said Harry Warrington, with a sigh of great humility; "I feel that I have neglected my own youth sadly; and am come to England but an ignoramus. Had my dear brother been alive, he would have represented our name and our colony, too, better than I can do. George was a scholar; George was a musician; George could talk with the most learned people in our country, and I make no doubt would have held his own here. Do you know, sir, I am glad to have come home, and to you especially, if but to learn how ignorant I am."

"If you know that well, 'tis a great gain already," said the Colonel, with a smile.

"At home, especially of late, and since we lost my brother, I used to think myself a mighty fine fellow, and have no doubt that the folks round about flattered me. I am wiser now,—that is, I hope I am,—though perhaps I am wrong, and only bragging again. But you see, sir, the gentry in our colony don't know very much, except about dogs and horses, and betting and games. I wish I knew more about books, and less about them."

"Nay. Dogs and horses are very good books, too, in their way, and we may read a deal of truth out of 'em. Some men are not made to be scholars, and may be very worthy citizens and gentlemen in spite of their ignorance. What call have all of us to be especially learned or wise, or to take a first place in the world? His Royal Highness is commander, and Martin Lambert is colonel, and Jack Hunt, who rides behind yonder, was a private soldier, and is now a very honest, worthy groom. So as we all do our best in our station, it matters not much whether that be high or low. Nay, how do we know what is high and what is low? and whether Jack's currycomb, or my epaulets, or his Royal Highness's baton, may not turn out to be pretty equal? When I began life, *et militavi non sine*—never mind what—I dreamed of success and honour; now I think of duty, and yonder folks, from whom we parted a few hours ago. Let us trot on, else we shall not reach Westerham before nightfall."

At Westerham the two friends were welcomed by their hosts, a stately matron, an old soldier, whose recollections and services were of five and forty years back, and the son of this gentleman and lady, the Lieutenant-Colonel of Kingsley's regiment, that was then stationed at Maidstone, whence the Colonel had come over on a brief visit to his parents. Harry looked with some curiosity at this officer, who, young as he was, had seen so much service, and obtained a character so high. There was little of the beautiful in his face. He was very lean and very pale; his hair was red, his nose and cheek-bones were high; but he had a fine courtesy towards his elders, a cordial greeting towards his friends, and an animation in conversation which caused those who heard him to forget, even to admire his homely looks.

Mr. Warrington was going to Tunbridge? Their James would bear him company, the lady of the house said, and whispered something to Colonel Lambert at supper, which occasioned smiles and a knowing wink or two from that officer. He called for wine, and toasted "Miss Lowther." "With all my heart," cried the enthusiastic Colonel James, and drained his glass to the very last drop. Mamma whispered her friend how James and the lady were going to make a match, and how she came of the famous Lowther family of the North.

"If she was the daughter of King Charlemagne," cries Lambert, "she is not too good for James Wolfe, or for his mother's son."

"Mr. Lambert would not say so if he knew her," the young Colonel declared.

"Oh, of course, she is the priceless pearl, and you are nothing," cries mamma. "No. I am of Colonel Lambert's opinion; and, if she brought all Cumberland to you for a jointure, I should say it was my James's due. That is the way with 'em, Mr. Warrington. We tend our children through fevers, and measles, and whooping-cough, and small-pox; we send them to the army and can't sleep at night for thinking; we break our hearts at parting with 'em, and have them at home only for a week or two in the year, or may-be ten years, and, after all our care, there comes a lass with a pair of bright eyes, and away goes our boy, and never cares a fig for us afterwards."

"And pray, my dear, how did you come to marry James's papa?" said the elder Colonel Wolfe. "And why didn't you stay at home with your parents?"

"Because James's papa was gouty, and wanted somebody to take care of him I suppose; not because I liked him a bit," answers the lady: and so with much easy talk and kindness the evening passed away.

On the morrow, and with many expressions of kindness and friendship for his late guest, Colonel Lambert gave over the young Virginian to Mr. Wolfe's charge, and turned his horse's head homewards, while the two gentlemen sped towards Tunbridge Wells. Wolfe was in a hurry to reach the place, Harry Warrington was, perhaps, not quite so eager: nay, when Lambert rode towards his own home, Harry's thoughts followed him with a great deal of longing desire to the parlour at Oakhurst, where he had spent three days in happy calm. Mr. Wolfe agreed in all Harry's enthusiastic praises of Mr. Lambert, and of his wife, and of his daughters, and of all that excellent family. "To have such a good name, and to live such a life as Colonel Lambert's," said Wolfe, "seem to me now the height of human ambition."

"And glory and honour?" asked Warrington. "Are those nothing? and would you give up the winning of them?"

"They were my dreams once," answered the Colonel, who had now different ideas of happiness, "and now my desires are much more tranquil. I have followed arms ever since I was fourteen years of age. I have seen almost every kind of duty connected with my calling. I know all the garrison towns in this country, and have had the honour to serve wherever there has been work to be done during the last ten years. I have done pretty near the whole of a soldier's duty, except, indeed, the command of an army, which can hardly be hoped for by one of my years; and now, methinks, I would like quiet, books to read, a wife to love me, and some children to dandle on my knee. I have imagined some such Elysium for myself, Mr. Warrington. True love is better than glory; and a tranquil fireside, with the woman of your heart seated by it, the greatest good the gods can send to us."

Harry imagined to himself the picture which his comrade called up. He said "Yes" in answer to the other's remark; but, no doubt, did not give a very cheerful assent, for his companion observed upon the expression of his face.

"You say 'Yes' as if a fireside and a sweetheart were not particularly to your taste."

"Why, look you, Colonel; there are other things which a young fellow might like to enjoy. You have had sixteen years of the world: and I am but a few months away from my mother's apron-strings. When I have seen a campaign or two, or six, as you have: when I have distinguished myself like Mr. Wolfe, and made the world talk of me, I then may think of retiring from it."

To these remarks, Mr. Wolfe, whose heart was full of a very different matter, replied by breaking out in a farther encomium of the joys of marriage; and a special rhapsody upon the beauties and merits of his mistress—a theme intensely interesting to himself, though not so, possibly, to his hearer, whose views regarding a married life, if he permitted himself to entertain any, were somewhat melancholy and despondent. A pleasant afternoon brought them to the end of their ride; nor did any accident or incident accompany it, save, perhaps, a mistake which Harry Warrington made at some few miles' distance from Tunbridge Wells, where two horsemen stopped them, whom Harry was for charging, pistol in hand, supposing them to be highwaymen. Colonel Wolfe, laughing, bade Mr. Warrington reserve his fire, for these folks were only innkeepers' agents, and not robbers (except in their calling). Gumbo, whose horse ran away with him at this particular juncture, was brought back after a great deal of bawling on his master's part, and the two gentlemen rode into the little town, alighted at their inn, and then separated, each in quest of the ladies whom he had come to visit.

Mr. Warrington found his aunt installed in handsome lodgings, with a guard of London lacqueys in her ante-room, and to follow her chair when she went abroad. She received him with the utmost kindness. His cousin, my Lady Maria, was absent when he arrived: I don't know whether the young gentleman was unhappy at not seeing her; or whether he disguised his feelings, or whether Madame de Bernstein took any note regarding them.

A beau in a rich figured suit, the first specimen of the kind Harry had seen, and two dowagers with voluminous hoops and plenty of rouge, were on a visit to the Baroness when her nephew made his bow to her. She introduced the young man to these personages as her nephew, the young Crœsus out of Virginia, of whom they had heard. She talked about the immensity of his estate, which was as large as Kent; and, as she had read, infinitely more fruitful. She mentioned how her half-sister, Madam Esmond, was called Princess Pocahontas in her own country. She never tired in her praises of mother and son, of their riches and their good qualities. The beau shook the young man by the hand, and was delighted to have the honour to make his acquaintance. The ladies praised him to his aunt so loudly that the modest youth was fain to blush at their compliments. They went away to inform the Tunbridge society of the news of his arrival. The little place was soon buzzing with accounts of the wealth, the good breeding, and the good looks of the Virginian.

"You could not have come at a better moment, my dear," the Baroness said to her nephew, as her visitors departed with many curtseys and congees. "Those three individuals have the most active tongues in the Wells. They will trumpet your good qualities in every company where they go. I have introduced you to a hundred people already, and, heaven help me! have told all sorts of fibs about the geography of Virginia in order to describe your estate. It *is* a prodigious large one, but I am afraid I have magnified it. I have filled it with all sorts of wonderful animals, gold mines, spices; I am not sure I have not said diamonds. As for your negroes, I have given your mother armies of them; and, in fact, represented her as a sovereign princess reigning over a magnificent dominion. So she *has* a magnificent dominion: I cannot tell to a few hundred thousand pounds how much her yearly income is, but I have no doubt it is a very great one. And you must prepare, sir, to be treated here as the heir-apparent of this royal lady. Do not let your head be turned! From this day forth you are going to be flattered as you have never been flattered in your life."

"And to what end, Ma'am?" asked the young gentleman. "I see no reason why I should be reputed so rich, or get so much flattery."

"In the first place, sir, you must not contradict your old aunt, who has no desire to be made a fool of before her company. And as for your reputation, you must know we found it here almost ready-made on our arrival. A London newspaper has somehow heard of you, and come out with a story of the immense wealth of a young gentleman from Virginia lately landed, and a cousin of my Lord Castlewood. Immensely wealthy you are, and can't help yourself. All the world is eager to see you. You shall go to church to-morrow morning, and see how the whole congregation will turn away from its books and prayers, to worship the golden calf in your person. You would not have had me undeceive them, would you, and speak ill of my own flesh and blood?"

"But how am I bettered by this reputation for money?" asked Harry.

"You are making your entry into the world, and the gold key will open most of its doors to you. To be thought rich is as good as to be rich. You need not spend much money. People will say that you hoard it, and your reputation for avarice will do you good rather than harm. You'll see how the mothers will smile upon you, and the daughters will curtsey! Don't look surprised! When I was a young woman myself I did as all the rest of the world did, and tried to better myself by more than one desperate attempt at a good marriage. Your poor grandmother, who was a saint upon earth to be sure, bating a little jealousy, used to scold me, and called me worldly. Worldly, my dear! So is the world worldly; and we must serve it as it serves us; and give it nothing for nothing. Mr. Henry Esmond Warrington—I can't help loving the two first names, sir, old woman as I am, and that I tell you—on coming here or to London, would have been nobody. Our protection would have helped him but little. Our family has little credit, and, *entre nous*, not much reputation. I suppose you know that Castlewood was more than suspected in '45, and hath since ruined himself by play?"

Harry had never heard about Lord Castlewood or his reputation.

"He never had much to lose, but he has lost that and more: his wretched estate is eaten up with mortgages. He has been at all sorts of schemes to raise money:—my dear, he has been so desperate at times, that I did not think my diamonds were safe with him; and have travelled to and from Castlewood without them. Terrible, isn't it, to speak so of one's own nephew? But you are my nephew, too, and not spoiled by the world yet, and I wish to warn you of its wickedness. I heard of your play-doings with Will and the chaplain, but they could do you no harm,—nay, I am told you had the better of them. Had you played with Castlewood, you would have had no such luck: and you *would* have played, had not an old aunt of yours warned my Lord Castlewood to keep his hands off you."

"What, Ma'am, did you interfere to preserve me?"

"I kept his clutches off from you: be thankful that you are come out of that ogre's den with any flesh on your bones! My dear, it has been the rage and passion of all our family. My poor silly brother played; both his wives played, especially the last one, who has little else to live upon now but her nightly assemblies in London, and the money for the cards. I would not trust her at Castlewood alone with you: the passion is too strong for them, and they would fall upon you, and fleece you; and then fall upon each other, and fight for the plunder. But for his place about the Court my poor nephew hath nothing, and that is Will's fortune, too, sir, and Maria's and her sister's."

"And are they, too, fond of the cards?"

"No; to do poor Molly justice, gaming is not her passion; but when she is amongst them in London, little Fanny will bet her eyes out of her head. I know what the passion is, sir: do not look so astonished; I have had it, as I had the measles when I was a child. I am not cured quite. For a poor old woman there is nothing left but that. You will see some high play at my card-tables to-night. Hush! my dear. It was that I wanted, and without which I moped so at Castlewood! I could not win of my nieces or their mother. They would not pay if they lost. 'Tis best to warn you, my dear, in time, lest you should be shocked by the discovery. I can't live without the cards, there's the truth."

A few days before, and while staying with his Castlewood relatives, Harry, who loved cards, and cock-fighting, and betting, and every conceivable sport himself, would have laughed very likely at this confession. Amongst that family into whose society he had fallen, many things were laughed at, over which some folks looked grave. Faith and honour were laughed at; pure lives were disbelieved; selfishness was proclaimed as common practice; sacred duties were sneeringly spoken of, and vice flippantly condoned. These were no Pharisees: they professed no hypocrisy of virtue, they flung no stones at discovered sinners:—they smiled, shrugged their shoulders, and passed on. The members of this family did not pretend to be a whit better than their neighbours, whom they despised heartily; they lived quite familiarly with the folks about whom and whose wives they told such wicked, funny stories; they took their share of what pleasure or plunder came to hand, and lived from day to day till their last day came for them. Of course there are no such people now; and human nature is very much changed in the last hundred years. At any rate, card-playing is greatly out of mode: about *that* there can be no doubt; and very likely there are not six ladies of fashion in London, who know the difference between Spadille and Manille.

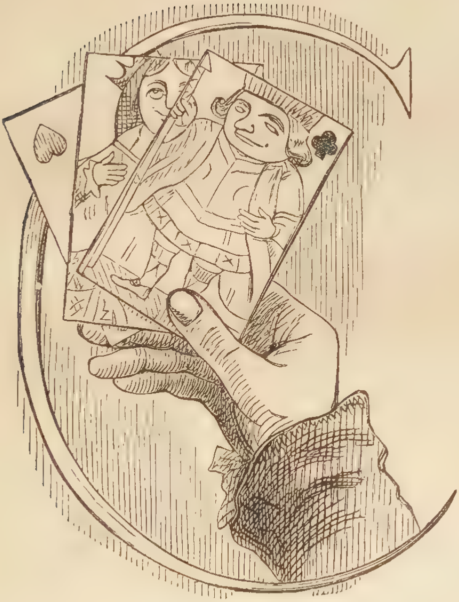
"How dreadfully dull you must have found those humdrum people at that village where we left you—but the savages were very kind to you, child!" said Madame de Bernstein, patting the young man's cheek with her pretty old hand.

"They were very kind; and it was not at all dull, Ma'am, and I think they are some of the best people in the world," said Harry, with his face flushing up. His aunt's tone jarred upon him. He could not bear that any one should speak or think lightly of the new friends whom he had found. He did not want them in such company.

The old lady, imperious and prompt to anger, was about to resent the check she had received, but a second thought made her pause. "Those two girls," she thought, "a sick-bed—an interesting stranger—of course he has been falling in love with one of them." Madame Bernstein looked round with a mischievous glance at Lady Maria, who entered the room at this juncture.

CHAPTER XXV.

NEW ACQUAINTANCES.



COUSIN MARIA made her appearance, attended by a couple of gardener's boys bearing baskets of flowers, with which it was proposed to decorate Madame de Bernstein's drawing-room against the arrival of her ladyship's company. Three footmen in livery, gorgeously laced with worsted, set out twice as many card-tables. A major-domo in black and a bag, with fine laced ruffles, and looking as if he ought to have a sword by his side, followed the lacqueys bearing fasces of wax-candles, of which he placed a pair on each card-table, and in the silver sconces on the wainscoted wall that was now gilt with the slanting rays of the sun, as was the prospect of the green common beyond, with its rocks and clumps of trees and houses twinkling in the sunshine. Groups of many-coloured figures in hoops and powder and brocade sauntered over the green, and dappled the plain with their shadows. On the other side from the Baroness's windows you saw the Pantiles, where a perpetual fair was held, and heard the clatter and buzzing of the company. A band of music was here performing for the benefit of the visitors to the Wells. Madame Bernstein's chief sitting-room might not suit a recluse or a student, but for those who liked bustle, gaiety, a bright cross light, and a view of all that was going on in the cheery busy place, no lodging could be pleasanter. And when the windows were lighted up, the passengers walking below were aware that her ladyship was at home and holding a card-assembly, to which an introduction was easy enough. By the way, in speaking of the past, I think the night-life of society a hundred years since was rather a *dark* life. There was not one wax-candle for ten which we now see in a lady's drawing-room: let alone gas and the wondrous new illuminations of clubs. Horrible guttering tallow smoked and stunk in passages. The candle-snuffer was a notorious officer in the theatre. See Hogarth's pictures: how dark they are, and how his feasts are, as it were, begrimed with tallow! In "Marriage à la Mode," in Lord Viscount Squanderfield's grand saloons, where he and his wife are sitting yawning before the horror-stricken steward when their party is over—there are but eight candles—one on each card-table, and half-a-dozen in a brass chandelier. If Jack Briefless convoked his friends to oysters and beer in his chambers, Pump Court, he would have twice as many. Let us comfort ourselves by thinking that Louis Quatorze in all his glory held his revels in the dark, and bless Mr. Price and other Luciferous benefactors of mankind, for banishing the abominable mutton of our youth.

So Maria with her flowers (herself the fairest flower,) popped her roses, sweetwilliams, and so forth, in vases here and there, and adorned the apartment to the best of her art. She lingered fondly over this bowl and that dragon jar, casting but sly timid glances the while at young Cousin Harry, whose own blush would have become any young woman, and you might have thought that she possibly intended to outstay her aunt; but that Baroness, seated in her arm-chair, her crooked tortoise-shell stick in her hand, pointed the servants imperiously to their duty; rated one and the other soundly: Tom for having a darn in his stocking; John for having greased his locks too profusely out of the candle-box; and so forth—keeping a stern domination over them. Another remark concerning poor Jeames of a hundred years ago: Jeames slept two in a bed, four in a room, and that room a cellar very likely, and he washed in a trough such as you would hardly see anywhere in London now out of the barracks of her Majesty's Foot Guards.

If Maria hoped a present interview, her fond heart was disappointed. "Where are you going to dine, Harry?" asks Madame de Bernstein. "My niece Maria and I shall have a chicken in the little parlour—I think you should go to the best ordinary. There is one at the 'White Horse' at three, we shall hear his bell in a minute or two. And you will understand, sir, that you ought not to spare expense, but behave like Princess Pocahontas's son. Your trunks have been taken over to the lodging I have engaged for you. It is not good for a lad to be always hanging about the aprons of two old women. Is it, Maria?"

"No," says her ladyship, dropping her meek eyes: whilst the other lady's glared in triumph. I think Andromeda had been a good deal exposed to the Dragon in the course of the last five or six days: and if Perseus had cut the latter's cruel head off he would have committed not unjustifiable monstricide. But he did not bare sword or shield; he only looked mechanically at the lacqueys in tawny and blue as they creaked about the room.

"And there are good mercers and tailors from London always here to wait on the company at the Wells. You had better see them, my dear, for your suit is not of the very last fashion—a little lace——"

"I can't go out of mourning, Ma'am," said the young man, looking down at his sables.

"Ho, sir," cried the lady, rustling up from her chair and rising on her cane, "wear black for your brother till you are as old as Methuselah, if you like. I am sure I don't want to prevent you. I only want you to dress, and to do like other people, and make a figure worthy of your name."

"Madam," said Mr. Warrington with great state, "I have not done anything to disgrace it that I know."

Why did the old woman stop and give a little start as if she had been struck? Let bygones be bygones. She and the boy had a score of little passages of this kind in which swords were crossed and thrusts rapidly dealt or parried. She liked Harry none the worse for his courage in facing her. "Sure a little finer linen than that shirt you wear will not be a disgrace to you, sir," she said, with rather a forced laugh.

Harry bowed and blushed. It was one of the homely gifts of his Oakhurst friends. He felt pleased somehow to think he wore it; thought of the new friends, so good, so pure, so simple, so kindly, with immense tenderness, and felt, while invested in this garment, as if evil could not touch him. He said he would go to his lodging, and make a point of returning arrayed in the best linen he had.

"Come back here, sir," said Madame Bernstein, "and if our company has not arrived, Maria and I will find some ruffles for you!" And herewith, under a footman's guidance, the young fellow walked off to his new lodgings.

Harry found not only handsome and spacious apartments provided for him, but a groom in attendance waiting to be engaged by his honour, and a second valet, if he was inclined to hire one to wait upon Mr. Gumbo. Ere he had been many minutes in his rooms, emissaries from a London tailor and bootmaker waited on him with the cards and compliments of their employers, Messrs. Regnier and Tull; the best articles in his modest wardrobe were laid out by Gumbo, and the finest linen with which his thrifty Virginian mother had provided him. Visions of the snow-surrounded home in his own country, of the crackling logs and the trim quiet ladies working by the fire, rose up before him. For the first time a little thought that the homely clothes were not quite smart enough, the home-worked linen not so fine as it might be, crossed the young man's mind. That he should be ashamed of anything belonging to him or to Castlewood! That was strange. The simple folks there were only too well satisfied with all things that were done or said, or produced at Castlewood; and Madam Esmond, when she sent her son forth on his travels, thought no young nobleman need be better provided. The clothes might have fitted better and been of a later fashion, to be sure—but still the young fellow presented a comely figure enough when he issued from his apartments, his toilette over; and Gumbo calling a chair, marched beside it, until they reached the ordinary where the young gentleman was to dine.

Here he expected to find the beau whose acquaintance he had made a few hours before at his aunt's lodging, and who had indicated to Harry that the "White Horse" was the most modish place for dining at the Wells, and he mentioned his friend's name to the host: but the landlord and waiters leading him into the room with many smiles and bows assured his honour that his honour did not need any other introduction than his own, helped him to hang up his coat and sword on a peg, asked him whether he would drink Burgundy, Pontac, or Champagne to his dinner, and led him to a table.

Though the most fashionable ordinary in the village, the "White Horse" did not happen to be crowded on this day. Monsieur Barbeau, the landlord, informed Harry that there was a great entertainment at Summer Hill, which had taken away most of the company; indeed, when Harry entered the room, there were but four other gentlemen in it. Two of these guests were drinking wine, and had finished their dinner: the other two were young men in the midst of their meal, to whom the landlord, as he passed, must have whispered the name of the new comer, for they looked at him with some appearance of interest, and made him a slight bow across the table as the smiling host bustled away for Harry's dinner.

Mr. Warrington returned the salute of the two gentlemen who bade him welcome to Tunbridge, and hoped he would like the place upon better acquaintance. Then they smiled and exchanged waggish looks with each other, of which Harry did not understand the meaning, nor why they cast knowing glances at the two other guests over their wine.

One of these persons was in a somewhat tarnished velvet coat with a huge queue and bag, and voluminous ruffles and embroidery. The other was a little beetle-browed, hook-nosed, high-shouldered gentleman, whom his opposite companion addressed as milor, or my lord, in a very high voice. My lord, who was sipping the wine before him, barely glanced at the new comer, and then addressed himself to his own companion.

"And so you know the nephew of the old woman—the Crœsus who comes to arrive?"

"You're thrown out there, Jack!" says one young gentleman to the other.

"Never could manage the lingo," said Jack. The two elders had begun to speak in the French language.

"But assuredly, my dear lord!" says the gentleman with the long queue.

"You have shown energy, my dear Baron! He has been here but two hours. My people told me of him only as I came to dinner."

"I knew him before!—I have met him often in London with the Baroness and my lord, his cousin," said the Baron.

A smoking soup for Harry here came in, borne by the smiling host. "Behold, sir! Behold a potage of my fashion!" says my landlord, laying down the dish and whispering to Harry the celebrated name of the nobleman opposite. Harry thanked Monsieur Barbeau in his own language, upon which the foreign gentleman, turning round, grinned most graciously at Harry, and said, "Fous bossedez notre langue barfaidement, Monsieur." Mr. Warrington had never heard the French language pronounced in that manner in Canada. He bowed in return to the foreign gentleman.

"Tell me more about the Crœsus, my good Baron," continued his lordship, speaking rather superciliously to his companion, and taking no notice of Harry, which perhaps somewhat nettled the young man.

"What will you, that I tell you, my dear lord? Crœsus is a youth like other youths; he is tall, like other youths; he is awkward, like other youths; he has black hair, as they all have who come from the Indies. Lodgings have been taken for him at Mrs. Rose's toy-shop."

"I have lodgings there too," thought Mr. Warrington. "Who is Crœsus they are talking of? How good the soup is!"

"He travels with a large retinue," the Baron continued, "four servants, two postchaises, and a pair of outriders. His chief attendant is a black man who saved his life from the savages in America, and who will not hear, on any account, of being made free. He persists in wearing mourning for his elder brother from whom he inherits his principality."

"Could anything console you for the death of yours, Chevalier?" cried out the elder gentleman.

"Milor! his property might," said the Chevalier, "which you know is not small."

"Your brother lives on his patrimony—which you have told me is immense—you by your industry, my dear Chevalier."

"Milor!" cries the individual addressed as Chevalier.

"By your industry or your esprit,—how much more noble! Shall you be at the Baroness's to-night? She ought to be a little of your parents, Chevalier?"

"Again I fail to comprehend your lordship," said the other gentleman, rather sulkily.

"Why, she is a woman of great wit—she is of noble birth—she has undergone strange adventures—she has but little principle (there you happily have the advantage of her). But what care we men of the world? You intend to go and play with the young Creole, no doubt, and get as much money from him as you can. By the way, Baron, suppose he should be a *guet à pens*, that young Creole? Suppose our excellent friend has invented him up in London, and brings him down with his character for wealth to prey upon the innocent folks here?"

"J'y ai souvent pensé, Milor," says the little Baron, placing his finger to his nose very knowingly, "that Baroness is capable of anything."

"A Baron—a Baroness, que voulez-vous, my friend? I mean the late lamented husband. Do you know who he was?"

"Intimately. A more notorious villain never dealt a card. At Venice, at Brussels, at Spa, at Vienna—the gaols of every one of which places he knew. I knew the man, my lord."

"I thought you would. I saw him at the Hague, where I first had the honour of meeting you, and a more disreputable rogue never entered my doors. A Minister must open them to all sorts of people, Baron,—spies, sharpers, ruffians of every sort."

"Parbleu, Milor, how you treat them!" says my lord's companion.

"A man of my rank, my friend—of the rank I held then—of course, must see all sorts of people—entre autres your acquaintance. What his wife could want with such a name as his I can't conceive."

"Apparently, it was better than the lady's own."

"Effectively! So I have heard of my friend Paddy changing clothes with the scarecrow. I don't know which name is the most distinguished, that of the English bishop or the German baron."

"My lord," cried the other gentleman, rising and laying his hand on a large star on his coat, "you forget that I, too, am a Baron and a Chevalier of the Holy Roman ——"

"—Order of the Spur!—not in the least, my dear knight and baron! You will have no more wine? We shall meet at Madame de Bernstein's to-night." The knight and baron quitted the table, felt in his embroidered pockets, as if for money to give the waiter, who brought him his great laced hat, and waving that menial off with a hand surrounded by large ruffles and blazing rings, he stalked away from the room.

It was only when the person addressed as my lord had begun to speak of the bishop's widow and the German baron's wife that Harry Warrington was aware how his aunt and himself had been the subject of the two gentlemen's conversation. Ere the conviction had settled itself on his mind, one of the speakers had quitted the room, and the other turning to a table at which two gentlemen sat, said, "What a little sharper it is! Everything I said about Bernstein relates mutato nomine to him. I knew the fellow to be a spy and a rogue. He has changed his religion I don't know how many times. I had him turned out of the Hague myself when I was ambassador, and I know he was caned in Vienna."

"I wonder my Lord Chesterfield associates with such a villain!" called out Harry from his table. The other couple of diners looked at him. To his surprise the nobleman so addressed went on talking.

"There cannot be a more *fieffé coquin* than this Poellnitz. Why, heaven be thanked, he has actually left me my snuff-box! You laugh?—the fellow is capable of taking it." And my lord thought it was his own satire at which the young men were laughing.

"You are quite right, sir," said one of the two diners, turning to Mr. Warrington, "though, saving your presence, I don't know what business it is of yours. My lord will play with anybody who will set him. Don't be alarmed, he is as deaf as a post, and did not hear a word that you said; and that's why my lord will play with anybody who will put a pack of cards before him, and that is the reason why he consorts with this rogue."

"Faith, I know other noblemen who are not particular as to their company," says Mr. Jack.

"Do you mean because I associate with you? I know my company, my good friend, and I defy most men to have the better of me."

Not having paid the least attention to Mr. Warrington's angry interruption, my lord opposite was talking in his favourite French with Monsieur Barbeau, the landlord, and graciously complimenting him on his dinner. The host bowed again and again; was enchanted that his Excellency was satisfied: had not forgotten the art which he had learned when he was a young man in his Excellency's kingdom of Ireland. The salmi was to my lord's liking? He had just served a dish to the young American seigneur who sat opposite, the gentleman from Virginia.

"To *whom?*" My lord's pale face became red for a moment, as he asked this question, and looked towards Harry Warrington, opposite to him.

"To the young gentleman from Virginia who has just arrived, and who perfectly possesses our beautiful language!" says Mr. Barbeau, thinking to kill two birds, as it were, with this one stone of a compliment.

"And to whom your lordship will be answerable for language reflecting upon my family, and uttered in the presence of these gentlemen," cried out Mr. Warrington, at the top of his voice, determined that his opponent should hear.

"You must go and call into his ear, and then he may perchance hear you," said one of the younger guests.

"I will take care that his lordship shall understand my meaning, one way or other," Mr. Warrington said, with much dignity: "and will not suffer calumnies regarding my relatives to be uttered by him or any other man!"

Whilst Harry was speaking, the little nobleman opposite to him did not hear him, but had time sufficient to arrange his own reply. He had risen, passing his handkerchief once or twice across his mouth, and laying his slim fingers on the table. "Sir," said he, "you will believe, on the word of a gentleman, that I had no idea before whom I was speaking, and it seems that my acquaintance, Monsieur de Poellnitz, knew you no better than myself. Had I known you, believe me that I should have been the last man in the world to utter a syllable that should give you annoyance; and I tender you my regrets and apologies before my Lord March and Mr. Morris here present."

To these words, Mr. Warrington could only make a bow, and mumble out a few words of acknowledgment: which speech having made believe to hear, my lord made Harry another very profound bow, and saying he should have the honour of waiting upon Mr. Warrington at his lodgings, saluted the company, and went away.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN WHICH WE ARE AT A VERY GREAT DISTANCE FROM OAKHURST.

WITHIN the precincts of the "White Horse Tavern," and coming up to the windows of the eating-room, was a bowling-green, with a table or two, where guests might sit and partake of punch or tea. The three gentlemen having come to an end of their dinner about the same time, Mr. Morris proposed that they should adjourn to the Green, and there drink a cool bottle. "Jack Morris would adjourn to the 'Dust Hole,' as a pretext for a fresh drink," said my lord. On which Jack said he supposed each gentleman had his own favourite way of going to the deuce. His weakness, he owned, was a bottle.

"My Lord Chesterfield's deuce is deuce-ace," says my Lord March. "His lordship can't keep away from the cards or dice."

"My Lord March has not one devil, but several devils. He loves gambling, he loves horse-racing, he loves betting, he loves drinking, he loves eating, he loves money, he loves women; and you have fallen into bad company, Mr. Warrington, when you lighted upon his lordship. He will play you for every acre you have in Virginia."

"With the greatest pleasure in life, Mr. Warrington!" interposes my lord.

"And for all your tobacco, and for all your spices, and for all your slaves, and for all your oxen and asses, and for everything that is yours."

"Shall we begin now, Jack? you are never without a dice-box or a bottle-screw. I will set Mr. Warrington for what he likes."

"Unfortunately, my lord, the tobacco, and the slaves, and the asses, and the oxen, are not mine, as yet. I am just of age, and my mother, scarce twenty years older, has quite as good chance of long life as I have."

"I will bet you that you survive her. I will pay you a sum now against four times the sum to be paid at her death. I will set you a fair sum over this table against the reversion of your estate in Virginia at the old lady's departure. What do you call your place?"

"Castlewood."

"A principality, I hear it is. I will bet that its value has been exaggerated ten times at least amongst the quidnuncs here. How came you by the name of Castlewood?—you are related to my lord? Oh, stay: I know,—my lady, your mother, descends from the real head of the house. He took the losing side in '15. I have had the story a dozen times from my old Duchess. She knew your grandfather. He was friend of Addison and Steele, and Pope and Milton, I dare say, and the bigwigs. It is a pity he did not stay at home, and transport the other branch of the family to the plantations."

"I have just been staying at Castlewood with my cousin there," remarked Mr. Warrington.

"Hm! Did you play with him? He's fond of pasteboard and bones."

"Never but for sixpences and a pool of commerce with the ladies."

"So much the better for both of you. But you played with Will Esmond if he was at home? I will lay ten to one you played with Will Esmond."

Harry blushed, and owned that of an evening his cousin and he had had a few games at cards.

"And Tom Sampson, the chaplain," cried Jack Morris, "was he of the party? I wager that Tom made a third, and the Lord deliver you from Tom and Will Esmond together!"

"Nay. The truth is I won of both of them." said Mr. Warrington.

"And they paid you? Well, miracles will never cease!"

"I did not say anything about miracles," remarked Mr. Harry, smiling over his wine.

"And you don't tell tales out of school—and so much the better, Mr. Warrington?" says my lord.

"If Mr. Warrington has been to school to Lord Castlewood and Will Esmond, your tutors must have cost you a pretty penny, mustn't they, March?"

"Must they, Morris?" said my lord, as if he only half liked the other's familiarity.

Both of the two gentlemen were dressed alike, in small scratch-wigs without powder, in blue frocks with plate buttons, in buckskins and riding-boots, in little hats with a narrow cord of lace, and no outward mark of fashion.

"I don't care for indoor games much, my lord," says Harry, warming with his wine; "but I should like to go to Newmarket, and long to see a good English hunting-field."

"We will show you Newmarket and the hunting-field, sir. Can you ride pretty well?"

"I think I can," Harry said; "and I can shoot pretty well, and jump some."

"What's your weight? I bet you we weigh even, or I weigh most. I bet you Jack Morris beats you at birds or a mark, at five-and-twenty paces. I bet you I jump farther than you on flat ground, here on this green."

"I don't know Mr. Morris's shooting—I never saw either gentleman before—but I take your bets, my lord, at what you please," cries Harry, who by this time was more than warm with Burgundy.

"Ponies on each!" cried my lord.

"Done and done!" cried my lord and Harry together. The young man thought it was for the honour of his country not to be ashamed of any bet made to him.

"We can try the last bet now, if your feet are pretty steady," said my lord, springing up, stretching his arms and limbs, and looking at the crisp dry grass. He drew his boots off, then his coat and waistcoat, buckling his belt round his waist, and flinging his clothes down to the ground.

Harry had more respect for his garments. It was his best suit. He took off the velvet coat and waistcoat, folded them up daintily, and, as the two or three tables round were slopped with drink, went to place the clothes on a table in the eating-room, of which the windows were open.

Here a new guest had entered; and this was no other than Mr. Wolfe, who was soberly eating a chicken and salad, with a modest pint of wine. Harry was in high spirits. He told the Colonel he had a bet with my Lord March—would Colonel Wolfe stand him halves? The Colonel said he was too poor to bet. Would he come out and see fair play? That he would with all his heart. Colonel Wolfe set down his glass, and stalked through the open window after his young friend.

"Who is that tallow-faced Put with the carroty hair?" says Jack Morris, on whom the Burgundy had had its due effect.

Mr. Warrington explained that this was Lieutenant-Colonel Wolfe, of the 20th Regiment.

"Your humble servant, gentlemen!" says the Colonel, making the company a rigid military bow.

"Never saw such a figure in my life!" cries Jack Morris. "Did you—March?"

"I beg your pardon, I think you said March?" said the Colonel, looking very much surprised.

"I am the Earl of March, sir, at Colonel Wolfe's service," said the nobleman, bowing. "My friend, Mr. Morris, is so intimate with me, that, after dinner, we are quite like brothers."

"Why is not all Tunbridge Wells by to hear this?" thought Morris. And he was so delighted that he shouted out, "Two to one on my lord!"

"Done!" calls out Mr. Warrington; and the enthusiastic Jack was obliged to cry "Done!" too.

"Take him, Colonel," Harry whispers to his friend.

But the Colonel said he could not afford to lose, and therefore could not hope to win.

"I see you have won one of our bets already, Mr. Warrington," my Lord March remarked. "I am taller than you by an inch or two, but you are broader round the shoulders."

"Pooh, my dear Will! I bet you you weigh *twice* as much as he does!" cries Jack Morris.

"Done, Jack!" says my lord, laughing. "The bets are all ponies. Will you take him, Mr. Warrington?"

"No, my dear fellow—one's enough," says Jack.

"Very good, my dear fellow," says my lord; "and now we will settle the other wager."

Having already arrayed himself in his best silk stockings, black satin-net breeches, and neatest pumps, Harry did not care to take off his shoes as his antagonist had done, whose heavy riding-boots and spurs were, to be sure, little calculated for leaping. They had before them a fine even green turf of some thirty yards in length, enough for a run and enough for a jump. A gravel-walk ran around this green, beyond which was a wall and gate-sign—a field azure, bearing the Hanoverian White Horse rampant between two skittles proper, and for motto the name of the landlord and of the animal depicted.

My lord's friend laid a handkerchief on the ground as the mark whence the leapers were to take their jump, and Mr. Wolfe stood at the other end of the grass-plat to note the spot where each came down. "My lord went first," writes Mr. Warrington, in a letter to Mrs. Mountain, at Castlewood, Virginia, still extant. "He was for having me take the lead; but, remembering the story about 'the Battel of Fontanoy' which my dearest George used to tell, I says, 'Monseigneur le Comte, tirez le premier, s'il vous play.' So he took his run in his *stocken-feet*, and for the honour of Old Virginia, I had the *gratafacation* of beating his lordship by more than two feet—viz., two feet nine inches—me jumping twenty-one feet three inches, by the drawer's measured tape, and his lordship only eighteen six. I had won from him about my weight before (which I knew the moment I set my eye upon him). So he and *Mr. Jack* paid me these two *betts*. And with my best duty to my mother—she will not be displeased with me, for I bett for *the honor of the Old Dominion*, and my opponent was a nobleman of the first quality, himself holding *two Erldomes*, and heir to a Duke. Betting is all the *rage* here, and the bloods and young fellows of fashion are betting away from morning till night.

"I told them—and that was my mischief perhaps—that there was a gentleman at home who could beat me by *a good foot;* and when they asked who it was, and I said Col. G. Washington, of Mount Vernon—as you know he can, and he's the only man in his county or mine that can do it—Mr. Wolfe asked me ever so many questions about Col. G. W., and showed that he had heard of him, and talked over last year's *unhappy campane* as if he knew every inch of the ground, and he knew the names of all our rivers, only he called the Potowmac Pottamac, at which we *had a good laugh at him.* My Lord of March and Ruglen was not in the least *ill-humour* about losing, and he and his friend handed me notes out of their pocket-books, which filled mine that was *getting very empty*, for the *vales* to the servants at my Cousin Castlewood's house and buying a horse at Oakhurst have very nearly put me on the necessity of making another draft upon my honoured mother or her London or Bristol agent."

These feats of activity over, the four gentlemen now strolled out of the tavern garden into the public walk, where, by this time, a great deal of company was assembled: upon whom Mr. Jack, who was of a frank and free nature, with a loud voice, chose to make remarks that were not always agreeable. And here, if my Lord March made a joke, of which his lordship was not sparing, Jack roared, "Oh, ho, ho! Oh, good Gad! Oh, my dear earl! Oh, my dear lord, you'll be the death of me!" "It seemed as if he wished everybody to know," writes Harry sagaciously to Mrs. Mountain, "that his friend and companion was *an Erl!*"

There was, indeed, a great variety of characters who passed. M. Poellnitz, no finer dressed than he had been at dinner, grinned, and saluted with his great laced hat and tarnished feathers. Then came by my Lord Chesterfield, in a pearl-coloured suit, with his blue ribbon and star, and saluted the young men in his turn.

"I will back the old boy for taking his hat off against the whole kingdom, and France, either," says my Lord March. "He has never changed the shape of that hat of his for twenty years. Look at it. There it goes again! Do you see that great big awkward pock-marked, snuff-coloured man, who hardly touches his clumsy beaver in reply. D—— his confounded impudence—do you know who that is?"

"No, curse him! Who is it, March?" asks Jack, with an oath.

"It's one Johnson, a Dictionary-maker, about whom my Lord Chesterfield wrote some most capital papers, when his dictionary was coming out, to patronize the fellow. I know they were capital. I've heard Horry Walpole say so, and he knows all about that kind of thing. Confound the impudent schoolmaster!"

"Hang him, he ought to stand in the pillory!" roars Jack.

"That fat man he's walking with is another of your writing fellows,—a printer,—his name is Richardson; he wrote 'Clarissa,' you know."

"Great heavens! my lord, is that the great Richardson? Is that the man who wrote 'Clarissa?'" called out Colonel Wolfe and Mr. Warrington, in a breath.

Harry ran forward to look at the old gentleman toddling along the walk with a train of admiring ladies surrounding him.

"Indeed, my very dear sir," one was saying, "you are too great and good to live in such a world; but sure you were sent to teach it virtue!"

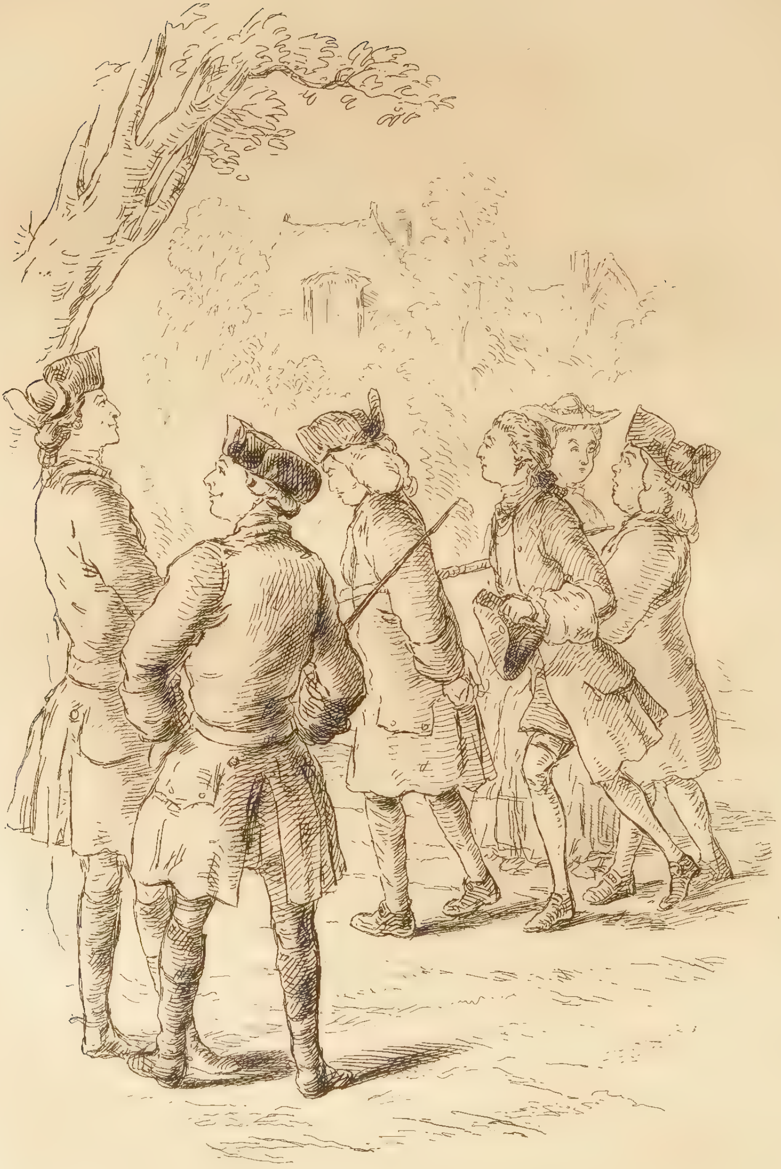
"Ah, my Miss Mulso! Who shall teach the teacher?" said the good, fat old man, raising a kind round face skywards. "Even he has his faults and errors! Even his age and experience does not prevent him from stumbl—— Heaven bless my soul, Mr. Johnson! I ask your pardon if I have trodden on your corn."

"You have done both, sir. You have trodden on the corn, and received the pardon," said Mr. Johnson, and went on mumbling some verses, swaying to and fro, his eyes turned towards the ground, his hands behind him, and occasionally endangering with his great stick the honest, meek eyes of his companion author.

"They do not see very well, my dear Mulso," he says to the young lady, "but such as they are, I would keep my *lash* from Mr. Johnson's cudgel. Your servant, sir." Here he made a low bow, and took off his hat to Mr. Warrington, who shrank back with many blushes, after saluting the great author. The great author was accustomed to be adored. A gentler wind never puffed mortal vanity. Enraptured spinsters flung tea-leaves round him, and incensed him with the coffee-pot. Matrons kissed the slippers they had worked for him. There was a halo of virtue round his nightcap. All Europe had thrilled, panted, admired, trembled, wept, over the pages of the immortal little kind honest man with the round paunch. Harry came back quite glowing and proud at having a bow from him. "Ah!" says he, "my lord, I am glad to have seen him!"

"Seen him! why, dammy, you may see him any day in his shop, I suppose?" says Jack, with a laugh.

"My brother declared that he, and Mr. Fielding, I think, was the name, were the greatest geniuses in England; and often used to say,



THE "DICTIONARY MAKER."

that when we came to Europe, his first pilgrimage would be to Mr. Richardson," cried Harry, always impetuous, honest, and tender, when he spoke of the dearest friend.

"Your brother spoke like a man," cried Mr. Wolfe, his pale face likewise flushing up. "I would rather be a man of genius, than a peer of the realm."

"Every man to his taste, Colonel," says my lord, much amused. "Your enthusiasm—I don't mean anything personal—refreshes me, on my honour it does."

"So it does me—by gad—perfectly refreshes me," cries Jack.

"So it does Jack—you see—it actually refreshes Jack! I say, Jack, which would you rather be?—a fat old printer, who has written a story about a confounded girl and a fellow that ruins her,—or a Peer of Parliament with ten thousand a year?"

"March—my Lord March, do you take me for a fool?" says Jack, with a tearful voice. "Have I done anything to deserve this language from you?"

"I would rather win honour than honours: I would rather have genius than wealth. I would rather make my name than inherit it, though my father's, thank God, is an honest one," said the young Colonel. "But pardon me, gentlemen!" And here making them a hasty salutation, he ran across the parade towards a young and elderly lady, and a gentleman, who were now advancing.

"It is the beautiful Miss Lowther. I remember now," says my lord. "See! he takes her arm! The report is, he is engaged to her."

"You don't mean to say such a fellow is engaged to any of the Lowthers of the North?" cries out Jack. "Curse me, what is the world come to, with your printers, and your half-pay ensigns, and your schoolmasters, and your infernal nonsense?"

The Dictionary-maker, who had shown so little desire to bow to my Lord Chesterfield, when that famous nobleman courteously saluted him, was here seen to take off his beaver, and bow almost to the ground, before a florid personage in a large round hat, with bands and a gown, who made his appearance in the Walk. This was my Lord Bishop of Salisbury, wearing complacently the blue riband and badge of the Garter, of which Noble Order his lordship was prelate.

Mr. Johnson stood, hat in hand, during the whole time of his conversation with Dr. Gilbert; who made many flattering and benedictory remarks to Mr. Richardson, declaring that he was the supporter of virtue, the preacher of sound morals, the mainstay of religion, of all which points the honest printer himself was perfectly convinced.

Do not let any young lady trip to her grandpapa's bookcase in consequence of this eulogium, and rashly take down "Clarissa" from the shelf. She would not care to read the volumes, over which her pretty ancestresses wept and thrilled a hundred years ago; which were commended by divines from pulpits and belauded all Europe over. I wonder, are our women more virtuous than their grandmothers, or only more squeamish? If the former, then Miss Smith of New York is certainly more modest than Miss Smith of London, who still does not scruple to say that tables, pianos, and animals have legs. Oh, my faithful, good old Samuel Richardson! Hath the news yet reached thee in Hades that thy sublime novels are huddled away in corners, and that our daughters may no more read "Clarissa" than "Tom Jones?" Go up, Samuel, and be reconciled with thy brother scribe, whom in life thou didst hate so. I wonder whether a century hence the novels of to-day will be hidden behind locks and wires, and make pretty little maidens blush?

"Who is yonder queer person in the high head-dress of my grandmother's time, who stops and speaks to Mr. Richardson?" asked Harry, as a fantastically dressed lady came up, and performed a curtsey and a compliment to the bowing printer.

Jack Morris nervously struck Harry a blow in the side with the butt end of his whip. Lord March laughed.

"Yonder queer person is my gracious kinswoman, Katharine, Duchess of Dover and Queensberry, at your service, Mr. Warrington. She was a beauty once! She is changed now, isn't she? What an old Gorgon it is! She is a great patroness of your book-men: and when that old frump was young, they actually made verses about her."

The Earl quitted his friends for a moment to make his bow to the old Duchess, Jack Morris explaining to Mr. Warrington how, at the Duke's death, my Lord of March and Ruglen would succeed to his cousin's dukedoms.

"I suppose," says Harry, simply, "his lordship is here in attendance upon the old lady?"

Jack burst into a loud laugh.

"Oh, yes! very much—exactly!" says he. "Why, my dear fellow, you don't mean to say you haven't heard about the little Opera-dancer?"

"I am but lately arrived in England, Mr. Morris," said Harry, with a smile, "and in Virginia, I own, we have not heard much about the little Opera-dancer."

Luckily for us, the secret about the little Opera-dancer never was revealed, for the young men's conversation was interrupted by a lady in a cardinal cape—and a hat by no means unlike those lovely head-pieces which have returned into vogue a hundred years after the date of our present history—who made a profound curtsey to the two gentlemen and received their salutation in return. She stopped opposite to Harry; she held out her hand, rather to his wonderment:

"Have you so soon forgotten me, Mr. Warrington?" she said.

Off went Harry's hat in an instant. He started, blushed, stammered, and called out "Good heavens!" as if there had been any celestial wonder in the circumstance! It was Lady Maria come out for a walk. He had not been thinking about her. She was, to say truth, for the moment so utterly out of the young gentleman's mind, that her sudden re-entry there and appearance in the body startled Mr. Warrington's faculties, and caused those guilty blushes to crowd into his cheeks.

No. He was not even thinking of her! A week ago—a year, a hundred years ago it seemed—he would not have been surprised to meet her anywhere. Appearing from amidst darkling shrubberies, gliding over green garden terraces, loitering on stairs, or corridors, hovering even in his dreams, all day or all night, bodily or spiritually, he had been accustomed to meet her. A week ago his heart used to beat. A week ago, and at the very instant when he jumped out of his sleep there was her idea smiling on him. And it was only last Tuesday that his love was stabbed and slain, and he not only had left off mourning for her, but had forgotten her!

"You will come and walk with me a little?" she said. "Or would you like the music best? I dare say you will like the music best."

"You know," said Harry, "I don't care about any music much except"—he was thinking of the evening hymn—"except of your playing." He turned very red again as he spoke, he felt he was perjuring himself horribly.

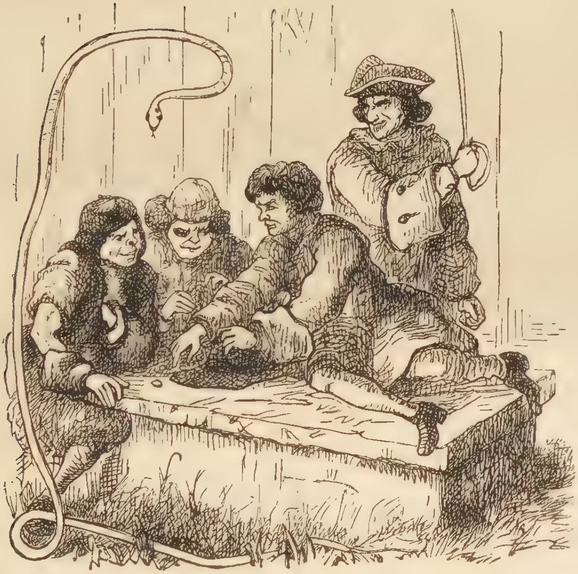
The poor lady was agitated herself by the flutter and agitation which she saw in her young companion. Gracious heaven! Could that tremor and excitement mean that she was mistaken, and that the lad was still faithful? "Give me your arm, and let us take a little walk," she said, waving round a curtsey to the other two gentlemen: "my aunt is asleep after her dinner." Harry could not but offer the arm, and press the hand that lay against his heart. Maria made another fine curtsey to Harry's bowing companions, and walked off with her prize. In her griefs, in her rages, in the pains and anguish of wrong and desertion, how a woman remembers to smile, curtsey, caress, dissemble! How resolutely they discharge the social proprieties; how they have a word, or a hand, or a kind little speech or reply for the passing acquaintance who crosses unknowing the path of the tragedy, drops a light airy remark or two, (happy self-satisfied rogue!) and passes on. He passes on, and thinks: "That woman was rather pleased with what I said. That joke I made was rather neat. I do really think Lady Maria looks rather favourably at me, and she's a dev'lish fine woman, begad she is!" O you wiseacre! Such was Jack Morris's observation and case as he walked away leaning on the arm of his noble friend, and thinking the whole Society of the Wells was looking at him. He had made some exquisite remarks about a particular run of cards at Lady Flushington's the night before, and Lady Maria had replied graciously and neatly, and so away went Jack perfectly happy.

The absurd creature! I declare we know nothing of anybody (but *that* for my part I know better and better every day). You enter smiling to see your new acquaintance, Mrs. A. and her charming family. You make your bow in the elegant drawing-room of Mr. and Mrs. B? I tell you that in your course through life you are for ever putting your great clumsy foot upon the mute invisible wounds of bleeding tragedies. Mrs. B.'s closets for what you know are stuffed with skeletons. Look there under the sofa-cushion. Is that merely Missy's doll, or is it the limb of a stifled Cupid peeping out? What do you suppose are those ashes smouldering in the grate?—Very likely a suttee has been offered up there just before you came in: a faithful heart has been burned out upon a callous corpse, and you are looking on the *cineri doloso.* You see B. and his wife receiving their company before dinner. Gracious powers! Do you know that that bouquet which she wears is a signal to Captain C., and that he will find a note under the little bronze Shakspeare on the mantelpiece in the study? And with all this you go up and say some uncommonly neat thing (as you fancy) to Mrs. B. about the weather (clever dog!), or about Lady E.'s last party (fashionable buck!), or about the dear children in the nursery (insinuating rogue!). Heaven and earth, my good Sir, how can you tell that B. is not going to pitch all the children out of the nursery window this very night, or that his lady has not made an arrangement for leaving them, and running off with the Captain? How do you know that those footmen are not disguised bailiffs?—that yonder large-looking butler (really a skeleton) is not the pawnbroker's man? and that there are not skeleton rôtis and entrées under every one of the covers? Look at their feet peeping from under the tablecloth. Mind how you stretch out your own lovely little slippers, Madam, lest you knock over a rib or two. Remark the Death's-head moths fluttering among the flowers. See the pale winding-sheets gleaming in the wax-candles! I know it is an old story, and especially that this preacher has yelled vanitas vanitatum five hundred times before. I can't help always falling upon it, and cry out with particular loudness and wailing, and become especially melancholy, when I see a dead love tied to a live love. Ha! I look up from my desk, across the street: and there come in Mr. and Mrs. D. from their walk in Kensington Gardens. How she hangs on him! how jolly and happy he looks, as the children frisk round! My poor dear benighted Mrs. D., there is a Regent's Park as well as a Kensington Gardens in the world. Go in, fond wretch! Smilingly lay before him what you know he likes for dinner. Show him the children's copies and the reports of their masters. Go with Missy to the piano, and play your artless duet together; and fancy you are happy!

There go Harry and Maria taking their evening walk on the common, away from the village which is waking up from its after-dinner siesta, and where the people are beginning to stir and the music to play. With the music Maria knows Madame de Bernstein will waken: with the candles she must be back to the tea-table and the cards. Never mind. Here is a minute. It may be my love is dead, but here is a minute to kneel over the grave and pray by it. He certainly was not thinking about her: he was startled and did not even know her. He was laughing and talking with Jack Morris and my Lord March. He is twenty years younger than she. Never mind. To-day is to-day in which we are all equal. This moment is ours. Come, let us walk a little way over the heath, Harry. She will go, though she feels a deadly assurance that he will tell her all is over between them, and that he loves the dark-haired girl at Oakhurst.

CHAPTER XXVII.

PLENUM OPUS ALEÆ.



LET me hear about those children, child, whom I saw running about at the house where they took you in, poor dear boy, after your dreadful fall?" says Maria, as they paced the common. "Oh, that fall, Harry! I thought I should have died when I saw it! You needn't squeeze one's arm so. You know you don't care for me?"

"The people are the very best, kindest, dearest people I have ever met in the world," cries Mr. Warrington. "Mrs. Lambert was a friend of my mother when she was in Europe for her education. Colonel Lambert is a most accomplished gentleman, and has seen service everywhere. He was in Scotland with his Royal Highness, in Flanders, at Minorca. No natural parents could be kinder than they were to me. How can I show my gratitude to them? I want to make them a present: I *must* make them a present," says Harry, clapping his hand into his pocket, which was filled with the crisp spoils of Morris and March.

"We can go to the toy-shop, my dear, and buy a couple of dolls for the children," says Lady Maria. "You would offend the parents by offering anything like payment for their kindness."

"Dolls for Hester and Theo! Why, do you think a woman is not woman till she is forty, Maria?" (The arm under Harry's here gave a wince perhaps,—ever so slight a wince.) "I can tell you Miss Hester by no means considers herself a child, and Miss Theo is older than her sister. They know ever so many languages. They have read books—oh! piles and piles of books! They play on the harpsichord and sing together admirable; and Theo composes, and sings songs of her own."

"Indeed! I scarcely saw them. I thought they were children. They looked quite childish. I had no idea they had all these perfections, and were such wonders of the world."

"That's just the way with you women! At home, if me or George praised a woman, Mrs. Esmond and Mountain, too, would be sure to find fault with her!" cries Harry.

"I am sure I would find fault with no one who is kind to *you*, Mr. Warrington," sighed Maria, "though you are not angry with me for envying them because they had to take care of you when you were wounded and ill—whilst I—I had to leave you?"

"You dear, good Maria!"

"No, Harry! I am *not* dear and good. There, sir, you needn't be so pressing in your attentions. Look! There is your black man walking with a score of other wretches in livery. The horrid creatures are going to fuddle at the tea-garden, and get tipsy like their masters. That dreadful Mr. Morris was perfectly tipsy when I came to you, and frightened you so."

"I had just won great bets from both of them. What shall I buy for you, my dear cousin?" And Harry narrated the triumphs which he had just achieved. He was in high spirits: he laughed, he bragged a little. "For the honour of Virginia I was determined to show them what jumping was," he said. "With a little practice I think I could leap two foot further."

Maria was pleased with the victories of her young champion. "But you must beware about play, child," she said. "You know it hath been the ruin of our family. My brother Castlewood, Will, our poor father, our aunt, Lady Castlewood herself, they have all been victims to it: as for my Lord March, he is the most dreadful gambler and the most successful of all the nobility."

"I don't intend to be afraid of him, nor of his friend Mr. Jack Morris neither," says Harry, again fingering the delightful notes. "What do you play at Aunt Bernstein's? Cribbage, all-fours, brag, whist, commerce, picquet, quadrille? I'm ready at any of 'em. What o'clock is that striking—sure 'tis seven!"

"And you want to begin now," said the plaintive Maria. "You don't care about walking with your poor cousin. Not long ago you did."

"Hey! Youth is youth, cousin!" cried Mr. Harry, tossing up his head, "and a young fellow must have his fling!" and he strutted by his partner's side, confident, happy, and eager for pleasure. Not long ago he did like to walk with her. Only yesterday he liked to be with Theo and Hester, and good Mrs. Lambert; but pleasure, life, gaiety, the desire to shine and to conquer, had also their temptations for the lad, who seized the cup like other lads, and did not care to calculate on the headache in store for the morning. Whilst he and his cousin were talking, the fiddles from the open orchestra on the Parade made a great tuning and squeaking, preparatory to their usual evening concert. Maria knew her aunt was awake again, and that she must go back to her slavery. Harry never asked about that slavery, though he must have known it, had he taken the trouble to think. He never pitied his cousin. He was not thinking about her at all. Yet when his mishap befel him, she had been wounded far more cruelly than he was. He had scarce ever been out of her thoughts, which of course she had had to bury under smiling hypocrisies, as is the way with her sex. I know, my dear Mrs. Grundy, you think she was an old fool? Ah! do you suppose fools' caps do not cover grey hair, as well as jet or auburn? Bear gently with our elderly *fredaines*, O you Minerva of a woman! Or perhaps you are so good and wise that you don't read novels at all? This I know, that there are late crops of wild oats, as well as early harvests of them; and (from observation of self and neighbour) I have an idea that the *avena fatua* grows up to the very last days of the year.

Like worldly parents anxious to get rid of a troublesome child, and go out to their evening party, Madame Bernstein and her attendants had put the sun to bed, whilst it was as yet light, and had drawn the curtains over it, and were busy about their cards and their candles, and their tea and negus, and other refreshments. One chair after another landed ladies at the Baroness's door, more or less painted, patched, brocaded. To these came gentlemen in gala raiment. Mr. Poellnitz's star was the largest, and his coat the most embroidered of all present. My Lord of March and Ruglen, when he made his appearance, was quite changed from the individual with whom Harry had made acquaintance at the "White Horse." His tight brown scratch was exchanged for a neatly curled feather top, with a bag and grey powder, his jockey-dress and leather breeches replaced by a rich and elegant French suit. Mr. Jack Morris had just such another wig and a suit of stuff as closely as possible resembling his lordship's. Mr. Wolfe came in attendance upon his beautiful mistress, Miss Lowther, and her aunt who loved cards, as all the world did. When my Lady Maria Esmond made her appearance, 'tis certain that her looks belied Madame Bernstein's account of her. Her shape was very fine, and her dress showed a great deal of it. Her complexion was by nature exceeding fair, and a dark frilled ribbon, clasped by a jewel, round her neck, enhanced its snowy whiteness. Her cheeks were not redder than those of other ladies present, and the roses were pretty openly purchased by everybody at the perfumery-shops. An artful patch or two, it was supposed, added to the lustre of her charms. Her hoop was not larger than the iron contrivances which ladies of the present day hang round their persons; and we may pronounce that the costume, if absurd in some points, was pleasing altogether. Suppose our ladies took to wearing of bangles and nose-rings? I dare say we should laugh at the ornaments, and not dislike them, and lovers would make no difficulty about lifting up the ring to be able to approach the rosy lips underneath.

As for the Baroness de Bernstein, when that lady took the pains of making a grand toilette, she appeared as an object, handsome still, and magnificent, but melancholy, and even somewhat terrifying to behold. You read the past in some old faces, while some others lapse into mere meekness and content. The fires go quite out of some eyes, as the crow's-feet pucker round them; they flash no longer with scorn, or with anger, or love: they gaze, and no one is melted by their sapphire glances; they look, and no one is dazzled. My fair young reader, if you are not so perfect a beauty as the peerless Lindamira, Queen of the Ball; if at the end of it, as you retire to bed, you meekly own that you have had but two or three partners, whilst Lindamira has had a crowd round her all night—console yourself with thinking that, at fifty, you will look as kind and pleasant as you appear now at eighteen. You will not have to lay down your coach and six of beauty and see another step into it, and walk yourself through the rest of life. You will have to forego no long-accustomed homage; you will not witness and own the depreciation of your smiles. You will not see fashion forsake your quarter; and remain all dust, gloom, and cobwebs within your once splendid saloons, with placards in your sad windows, gaunt, lonely, and to let! You may not have known any grandeur, but you won't feel any desertion. You will not have enjoyed millions, but you will have escaped bankruptcy. "Our hostess," said my Lord Chesterfield to his friend in a confidential whisper, of which the utterer did not in the least know the loudness, "puts me in mind of Covent Garden in my youth. Then it was the court end of the town, and inhabited by the highest fashion. Now, a nobleman's house is a gaming-house, or you may go in with a friend and call for a bottle."

"Hey! a bottle and a tavern are good things in their way," says my Lord March, with a shrug of his shoulders. "I was not born before the Georges came in, though I intend to live to a hundred. I never knew the Bernstein but as an old woman; and if she ever had beauty, hang me if I know how she spent it."

"No, hang me, how did she spend it?" laughs out Jack Morris.

"Here's a table! Shall we sit down and have a game?—Don't let the German come in. He won't pay. Mr. Warrington, will you take a card?" Mr. Warrington and my Lord Chesterfield found themselves partners against Mr. Morris and the Earl of March. "You have come too late, Baron," says the elder nobleman to the other nobleman who was advancing. "We have made our game. What, have you forgotten Mr. Warrington of Virginia—the young gentleman whom you met in London?"

"The young gentleman whom I met at Arthur's Chocolate House had black hair, a little cocked nose, and was by no means so fortunate in his personal appearance as Mr. Warrington," said the Baron with much presence of mind. "Warrington, Dorrington, Harrington? We of the continent cannot retain your insular names. I certify that this gentleman is not the individual of whom I spoke at dinner." And, glancing kindly upon him, the old beau sidled away to a farther end of the room, where Mr. Wolfe and Miss Lowther were engaged in deep conversation in the embrasure of a window. Here the Baron thought fit to engage the Lieutenant-Colonel upon the Prussian manual exercise, which had lately been introduced into King George II.'s army—a subject with which Mr. Wolfe was thoroughly familiar, and which no doubt would have interested him at any other moment but that. Nevertheless the old gentleman uttered his criticisms and opinions, and thought he perfectly charmed the two persons to whom he communicated them.

At the commencement of the evening the Baroness received her guests personally, and as they arrived engaged them in talk and introductory courtesies. But as the rooms and tables filled, and the parties were made up, Madame de Bernstein became more and more restless, and finally retreated with three friends to her own corner, where a table specially reserved for her was occupied by her major-domo. And here the old lady sat down resolutely, never changing her place or quitting her game till cock-crow. The charge of receiving the company devolved now upon my Lady Maria, who did not care for cards, but dutifully did the honours of the house to her aunt's guests, and often rustled by the table where her young cousin was engaged with his three friends.

"Come and cut the cards for us," said my Lord March to her ladyship, as she passed on one of her wistful visits. "Cut the cards, and bring us luck, Lady Maria! We have had none to-night, and Mr. Warrington is winning everything."

"I hope you are not playing high, Harry," said the lady, timidly.

"Oh, no, only sixpences," cried my lord, dealing.

"Only sixpences," echoed Mr. Morris, who was Lord March's partner. But Mr. Morris must have been very keenly alive to the value of sixpence, if the loss of a few such coins could make his round face look so dismal. My Lord Chesterfield sat opposite Mr. Warrington, sorting his cards. No one could say, by inspecting that calm physiognomy, whether good or ill fortune was attending his lordship.

Some word, not altogether indicative of delight, slipped out of Mr. Morris's lips, on which his partner cried out, "Hang it, Morris, play your cards, and hold your tongue!" Considering they were only playing for sixpences, his lordship, too, was strangely affected.

Maria, still fondly lingering by Harry's chair, with her hand at the back of it, could see his cards, and that a whole covey of trumps was ranged in one corner. She had not taken away his luck. She was pleased to think she had cut that pack which had dealt him all those pretty trumps. As Lord March was dealing, he had said in a quiet voice to Mr. Warrington, "The bet as before, Mr. Warrington, or shall we double it?"

"Anything you like, my lord," said Mr. Warrington, very quietly.

"We will say, then — shillings."

"Yes, shillings," says Mr. Warrington, and the game proceeded.

The end of the day's, and some succeeding days' sport may be gathered from the following letter, which was never delivered to the person to whom it was addressed, but found its way to America in the papers of Mr. Henry Warrington:—

"*Tunbridge Wells, August* 10, 1756.

"DEAR GEORGE,—As White's two bottles of Burgundy and a pack of cards constitute all the joys of your life, I take for granted that you are in London at this moment, preferring smoke and faro to fresh air and fresh haystacks. This will be delivered to you by a young gentleman with whom I have lately made acquaintance, and whom you will be charmed to know. He will play with you at any game for any stake, up to any hour of the night, and drink any reasonable number of bottles during the play. Mr. Warrington is no other than the Fortunate Youth about whom so many stories have been told in the *Public Advertiser* and other prints. He has an estate in Virginia as big as Yorkshire, with the incumbrance of a mother, the reigning Sovereign; but, as the country is unwholesome, and fevers plentiful, let us hope that Mrs. Esmond will die soon, and leave this virtuous lad in undisturbed possession. She is aunt of that *polisson* of a Castlewood, who never pays his play-debts, unless he is more honourable in his dealings with you than he has been with me. Mr. W. is de bonne race. We must have him of our society, if it be only that I may win my money back from him.

"He has had the devil's luck here, and has been winning everything, whilst his old card-playing beldam of an aunt has been losing. A few nights ago, when I first had the ill luck to make his acquaintance, he beat me in jumping (having practised the art amongst the savages, and running away from bears in his native woods); he won bets of me and Jack Morris about my weight; and at night, when we sat down to play, at old Bernstein's, he won from us all round. If you can settle our last Epsom account, please hand over to Mr. Warrington 350*l.*, which I still owe him, after pretty well emptying my pocket-book. Chesterfield has dropped six hundred to him, too; but his lordship does not wish to have it known, having sworn to give up play, and live cleanly. Jack Morris, who has not been hit as hard as either of us, and can afford it quite as well, for the fat chuff has no houses nor *train* to keep up, and all his misbegotten father's money in hand, roars like a bull of Bashan about his losses. We had a second night's play, *en petit comité*, and Barbeau served us a fair dinner in a private room. Mr. Warrington holds his tongue like a gentleman, and none of us have talked about our losses; but the whole place does, for us. Yesterday the Cattarina looked as sulky as thunder, because I would not give her a diamond necklace, and says I refuse her, because I have lost five thousand to the Virginian. My old

Duchess of Q. has the very same story, besides knowing to a fraction wha
Chesterfield and Jack have lost.

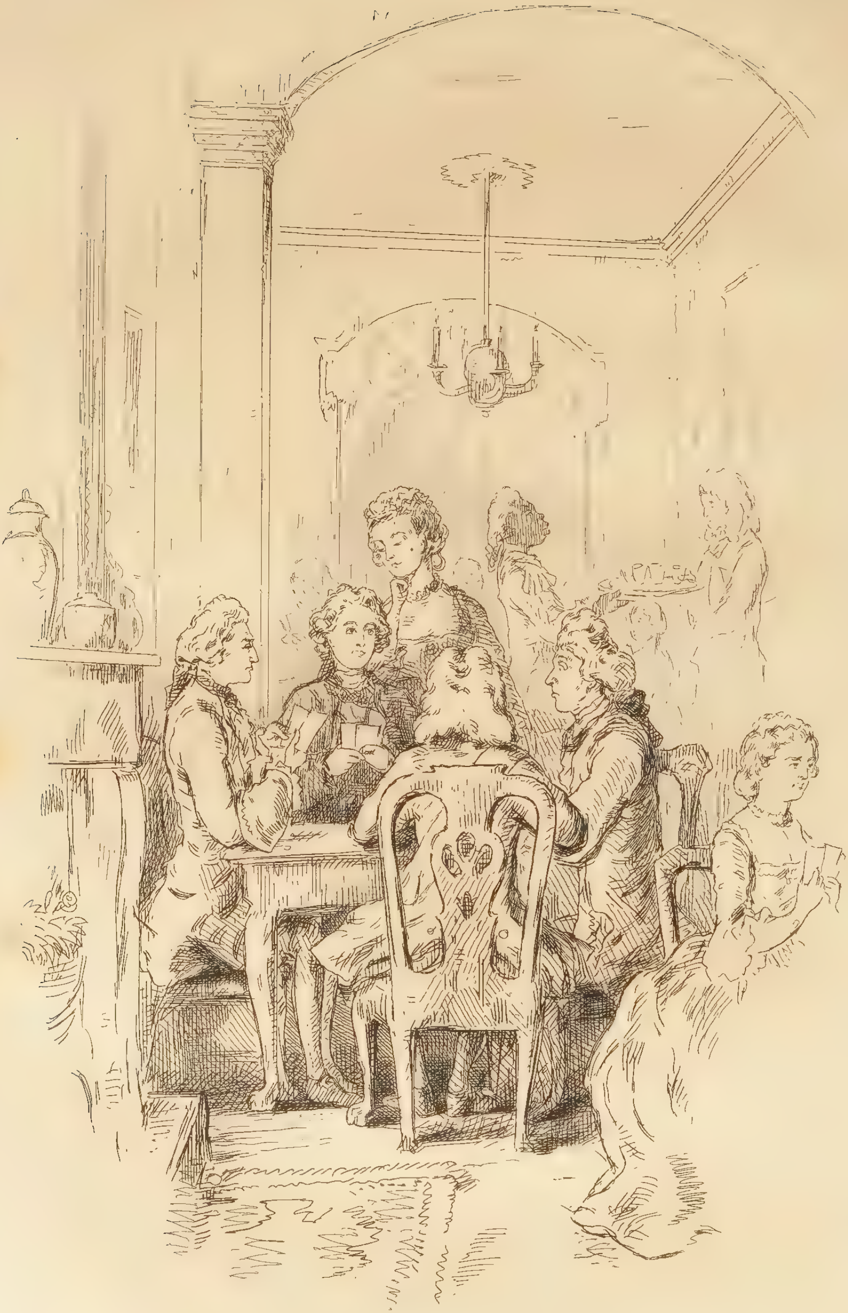
"Warrington treated the company to breakfast and music at the rooms; an
you should have seen how the women tore him to pieces. That fiend of
Cattarina ogled him out of my vis-à-vis, and under my very nose, yesterday, as w
were driving to Penshurst, and I have no doubt has sent him a *billet-doux* ere thi
He shot Jack Morris all to pieces at a mark: we shall try him with partridge
when the season comes.

"He is a fortunate fellow, certainly. He has youth (which is not deboshed b
evil courses in Virginia, as ours is in England); he has good health, good look
and good luck.

"In a word, Mr. Warrington has won our money in a very gentlemanlik
manner; and, as I like him, and wish to win some of it back again, I put hi
under your worship's saintly guardianship. Adieu! I am going to the Nort
and shall be back for Doncaster.

"Yours ever, dear George,
"M. & R."

"To George Augustus Selwyn, Esq., at White's Chocolate House,
St. James's Street."



THE RULING PASSION

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD.

OUR young Virginian found himself, after two or three days at Tunbridge Wells, by far the most important personage in that merry little watering-place. No nobleman in the place inspired so much curiosity. My Lord Bishop of Salisbury himself was scarce treated with more respect. People turned round to look after Harry as he passed, and country-folks stared at him as they came into market. At the rooms, matrons encouraged him to come round to them, and found means to leave him alone with their daughters, most of whom smiled upon him. Everybody knew, to an acre and a shilling, the extent of his Virginian property, and the amount of his income. At every tea-table in the Wells, his winnings at play were told and calculated. Wonderful is the knowledge which our neighbours have of our affairs! So great was the interest and curiosity which Harry inspired, that people even smiled upon his servant, and took Gumbo aside and treated him with ale and cold meat, in order to get news of the young Virginian. Mr. Gumbo fattened under the diet, became a leading member of the Society of Valets in the place, and lied more enormously than ever. No party was complete unless Mr. Warrington attended it. The lad was not a little amused and astonished by this prosperity, and bore his new honours pretty well. He had been bred at home to think too well of himself, and his present good fortune no doubt tended to confirm his self-satisfaction. But he was not too much elated. He did not brag about his victories or give himself any particular airs. In engaging in play with the gentlemen who challenged him, he had acted up to his queer code of honour. He felt as if he was bound to meet them when they summoned him, and that if they invited him to a horse-race, or a drinking-bout, or a match at cards, for the sake of Old Virginia he must not draw back. Mr. Harry found his new acquaintances ready to try him at all these sports and contests. He had a strong head, a skilful hand, a firm seat, an unflinching nerve. The representative of Old Virginia came off very well in his friendly rivalry with the mother country.

Madame de Bernstein, who got her fill of cards every night, and, no doubt, repaired the ill fortune of which we heard in the last chapter, was delighted with her nephew's victories and reputation. He had shot with Jack Morris and beat him: he had ridden a match with Mr. Scamper and won it. He played tennis with Captain Batts, and, though the boy had never tried the game before, in a few days he held his own uncommonly well. He had engaged in play with those celebrated gamesters, my Lords of Chesterfield and March; and they both bore testimony to his coolness, gallantry, and good breeding. At his books Harry was not brilliant certainly: but he could write as well as a great number of men of fashion; and the *naïveté* of his ignorance amused the old lady. She had read books in her time, and could talk very well about them with bookish people: she had a relish for humour and delighted in Molière and Mr. Fielding, but she loved the world far better than the library, and was never so interested in any novel but that she would leave it for a game of cards. She superintended with fond pleasure the improvements of Harry's toilette: rummaged out fine laces for his ruffles and shirt, and found a pretty diamond-brooch for his frill. He attained the post of prime favourite of all her nephews and kinsfolk. I fear Lady Maria was only too well pleased at the lad's successes, and did not grudge him his superiority over her brothers; but those gentlemen must have quaked with fear and envy when they heard of Mr. Warrington's prodigious successes, and the advance which he had made in their wealthy aunt's favour.

After a fortnight of Tunbridge, Mr. Harry had become quite a personage. He knew all the good company in the place. Was it his fault if he became acquainted with the bad likewise? Was he very wrong in taking the world as he found it, and drinking from that sweet sparkling pleasure-cup, which was filled for him to the brim? The old aunt enjoyed his triumphs, and for her part only bade him pursue his enjoyments. She was not a rigorous old moralist, nor, perhaps, a very wholesome preceptress for youth. If the Cattarina wrote him billets-doux, I fear Aunt Bernstein would have bade him accept the invitations: but the lad had brought with him from his colonial home a stock of modesty which he still wore along with the honest home-spun linen. Libertinism was rare in those thinly-peopled regions from which he came. The vices of great cities were scarce known or practised in the rough towns of the American Continent. Harry Warrington blushed like a girl at the daring talk of his new European associates: even Aunt Bernstein's conversation and jokes astounded the young Virginian, so that the worldly old woman would call him Joseph, or simpleton.

But, however innocent he was, the world gave him credit for being as bad as other folks. How was he to know that he was not to associate with that saucy Cattarina? He had seen my Lord March driving her about in his lordship's phaeton. Harry thought there was no harm in giving her his arm, and parading openly with her in the public walks. She took a fancy to a trinket at the toy-shop; and, as his pockets were full of money, he was delighted to make her a present of the locket, which she coveted. The next day it was a piece of lace: again Harry gratified her. The next day it was something else: there was no end to Madam Cattarina's fancies: but here the young gentleman stopped, turning off her request with a joke and a laugh. He was shrewd enough, and not reckless or prodigal, though generous. He had no idea of purchasing diamond drops for the petulant little lady's pretty ears.

But who was to give him credit for his modesty? Old Bernstein insisted upon believing that her nephew was playing Don Juan's part, and supplanting my Lord March. She insisted the more when poor Maria was by; loving to stab the tender heart of that spinster, and enjoying her niece's piteous silence and discomfiture.

"Why, my dear," says the Baroness, "boys will be boys, and I don't want Harry to be the first milksop in his family!" The bread which Maria ate at her aunt's expense choked her sometimes. Oh me, how hard and indigestible some women know how to make it!

Mr. Wolfe was for ever coming over from Westerham to pay court to the lady of his love; and, knowing that the Colonel was entirely engaged in that pursuit, Mr. Warrington scarcely expected to see much of him, however much he liked that officer's conversation and society. It was different from the talk of the ribald people round about Harry. Mr. Wolfe never spoke of cards, or horses' pedigrees; or bragged of his performances in the hunting-field, or boasted of the favours of women; or retailed any of the innumerable scandals of the time. It was not a good time. That old world was more dissolute than ours. There was an old king with mistresses openly in his train, to whom the great folks of the land did honour. There was a nobility, many of whom were mad and reckless in the pursuit of pleasure; there was a looseness of words and acts which we must note, as faithful historians, without going into particulars, and needlessly shocking present readers. Our young gentleman had lighted upon some of the wildest of these wild people, and had found an old relative who lived in the very midst of the rout.

Harry then did not remark how Colonel Wolfe avoided him, or when they casually met, at first notice the Colonel's cold and altered demeanour. He did not know the stories that were told of him. Who does know the stories that are told of him? Who makes them? Who are the fathers of those wondrous lies? Poor Harry did not know the reputation he was getting; and that, whilst he was riding his horse and playing his game and taking his frolic, he was passing amongst many respectable persons for being the most abandoned and profligate and godless of young men.

Alas, and alas! to think that the lad whom we liked so, and who was so gentle and quiet when with us, so simple and so easily pleased, should be a hardened profligate, a spendthrift, a confirmed gamester, a frequenter of abandoned women! These stories came to worthy Colonel Lambert at Oakhurst: first one bad story, then another, then crowds of them, till the good man's kind heart was quite filled with grief and care, so that his family saw that something annoyed him. At first he would not speak on the matter at all, and put aside the wife's fond queries. Mrs. Lambert thought a great misfortune had happened; that her husband had been ruined; that he had been ordered on a dangerous service; that one of the boys was ill, disgraced, dead; who can resist an anxious woman, or escape the cross-examination of the conjugal pillow? Lambert was obliged to tell a part of what he knew about Harry Warrington. The wife was as much grieved and amazed as her husband had been. From papa's and mamma's bedroom the grief, after being stifled for a while under the bed-pillows there, came downstairs. Theo and Hester took the complaint after their parents, and had it very bad. O kind little wounded hearts! At first Hester turned red, flew into a great passion, clenched her little fists, and vowed she would not believe a word of the wicked stories; but she ended by believing them. Scandal almost always does master people: especially good and innocent people, Oh, the serpent they had nursed by their fire! Oh, the wretched, wretched boy! To think of his walking about with that horrible painted Frenchwoman, and giving her diamond necklaces, and parading his shame before all the society at the Wells! The three ladies having cried over the story, and the father being deeply moved by it, took the parson into their confidence. In vain he preached at church next Sunday his favourite sermon about scandal, and inveighed against our propensity to think evil. We repent; we promise to do so no more; but when the next bad story comes about our neighbour we believe it. So did those kind, wretched Oakhurst folks believe what they heard about poor Harry Warrington.

Harry Warrington meanwhile was a great deal too well pleased with himself to know how ill his friends were thinking of him, and was pursuing a very idle and pleasant, if unprofitable, life, without having the least notion of the hubbub he was creating, and the dreadful repute in which he was held by many good men. Coming out from a match at tennis with Mr. Batts, and pleased with his play and all the world, Harry overtook Colonel Wolfe, who had been on one of his visits to the lady of his heart. Harry held out his hand, which the Colonel took, but the latter's salutation was so cold, that the young man could not help remarking it, and especially noting how Mr. Wolfe, in return for a fine bow from Mr. Batts's hat, scarcely touched his own with his forefinger. The tennis captain walked away looking somewhat disconcerted, Harry remaining behind to talk with his friend of Westerham. Mr. Wolfe walked by him for a while, very erect, silent, and cold.

"I have not seen you these many days," says Harry.

"You have had other companions," remarks Mr. Wolfe, curtly.

"But I had rather be with you than any of them," cries the young man.

"Indeed I might be better company for you than some of them," says the other.

"Is it Captain Batts you mean?" asked Harry.

"He is no favourite of mine, I own; he bore a rascally reputation when he was in the army, and I doubt has not mended it since he was turned out. You certainly might find a better friend than Captain Batts. Pardon the freedom which I take in saying so," says Mr. Wolfe, grimly.

"Friend! he is no friend: he only teaches me to play tennis: he is hand-in-glove with my lord, and all the people of fashion here who play."

"I am not a man of fashion," says Mr. Wolfe.

"My dear Colonel, what is the matter? Have I angered you in any way? You speak almost as if I had, and I am not conscious of having done anything to forfeit your regard," said Mr. Warrington.

"I will be free with you, Mr. Warrington," said the Colonel, gravely, "and tell you with frankness that I don't like some of your friends."

"Why, sure, they are men of the first rank and fashion in England," cries Harry, not choosing to be offended with his companion's bluntness.

"Exactly! They are men of too high rank and too great fashion for a hard-working poor soldier like me; and if you continue to live with such, believe me, you will find numbers of us humdrum people can't afford to keep such company. I am here, Mr. Warrington, paying my addresses to an honourable lady. I met you yesterday openly walking with a French ballet-dancer, and you took off your hat. I must frankly tell you that I had rather you would not take off your hat when you go out in such company."

"Sir," said Mr. Warrington, growing very red, "do you mean that I am to forego the honour of Colonel Wolfe's acquaintance altogether?"

"I certainly shall request you to do so when you are in company with that person," said Colonel Wolfe, angrily; but he used a word not to be written at present, though Shakspeare puts it in the mouth of Othello.

"Great heavens! what a shame it is to speak so of any woman!"

cries Mr. Warrington. "How dare any man say that that poor creature is not honest?"

"You ought to know best, sir," says the other, looking at Harry with some surprise, "or the world belies you very much."

"What ought I to know best? I see a poor little French dancer who is come hither with her mother, and is ordered by the doctors to drink the waters. I know that a person of my rank in life does not ordinarily keep company with people of hers; but really, Colonel Wolfe, are you so squeamish? Have I not heard you say that you did not value birth, and that all honest people ought to be equal? Why should I not give this little unprotected woman my arm? there are scarce half-a-dozen people here who can speak a word of her language. I can talk a little French, and she is welcome to it; and if Colonel Wolfe does not choose to touch his hat to me, when I am walking with her, by George! he may leave it alone," cried Harry, flushing up.

"You don't mean to say," says Mr. Wolfe, eyeing him, "that you don't know the woman's character?"

"Of course, sir, she is a dancer, and, I suppose, no better or worse than her neighbours. But I mean to say that, had she been a duchess, or your grandmother, I couldn't have respected her more."

"You don't mean to say that you did not win her at dice, from Lord March."

"At what!"

"At dice, from Lord March. Everybody knows the story. Not a person at the Wells is ignorant of it. I heard it but now, in the company of that good old Mr. Richardson, and the ladies were saying that you would be a character for a colonial Lovelace."

"What on earth else have they said about me?" asked Harry Warrington; and such stories as he knew the Colonel told. The most alarming accounts of his own wickedness and profligacy were laid before him. He was a corrupter of virtue, an habitual drunkard and gamester, a notorious blasphemer and freethinker, a fitting companion for my Lord March, finally, and the company into whose society he had fallen. "I tell you these things," said Mr. Wolfe, "because it is fair that you should know what is said of you, and because I do heartily believe, from your manner of meeting the last charge brought against you, that you are innocent on most of the other counts. I feel, Mr. Warrington, that I, for one, have been doing you a wrong; and sincerely ask you to pardon me."

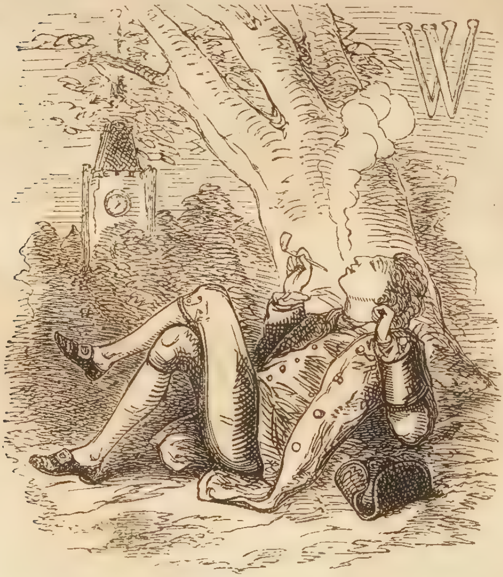
Of course, Harry was eager to accept his friend's apology, and they shook hands with sincere cordiality this time. In respect of most of the charges brought against him, Harry rebutted them easily enough: as for the play, he owned to it. He thought that a gentleman should not refuse a fair challenge from other gentlemen, if his means allowed him: and he never would play beyond his means. After winning considerably at first, he could afford to play large stakes, for he was playing with other people's money. Play, he thought, was fair,—it certainly was pleasant. Why, did not all England, except the Methodists, play? Had he not seen the best company at the Wells over the cards — his aunt amongst them?

Mr. Wolfe made no immediate comment upon Harry's opinion as to the persons who formed the best company at the Wells, but he frankly talked with the young man, whose own frankness had won him, and warned him that the life he was leading might be the pleasantest, but surely was not the most profitable of lives. "It can't be, sir," said the Colonel, "that a man is to pass his days at horse-racing and tennis, and his nights carousing or at cards. Sure every man was made to do some work; and a gentleman, if he has none, must make some. Do you know the laws of your country, Mr. Warrington? Being a great proprietor, you will doubtless one day be a magistrate at home. Have you travelled over the country, and made yourself acquainted with its trades and manufactures? These are fit things for a gentleman to study, and may occupy him as well as a cockfight or a cricket-match. Do you know anything of our profession? That, at least, you will allow is a noble one, and, believe me, there is plenty in it to learn, and suited, I should think, to you. I speak of it rather than of books and the learned professions, because, as far as I can judge, your genius does not lie that way. But honour is the aim of life," cried Mr. Wolfe, "and every man can serve his country one way or the other. Be sure, sir, that idle bread is the most dangerous of all that is eaten; that cards and pleasure may be taken by way of pastime after work, but not instead of work, and all day. And do you know, Mr. Warrington, instead of being the Fortunate Youth, as all the world calls you, I think you are rather Warrington the Unlucky, for you are followed by daily idleness, daily flattery, daily temptation, and the Lord, I say, send you a good deliverance out of your good fortune."

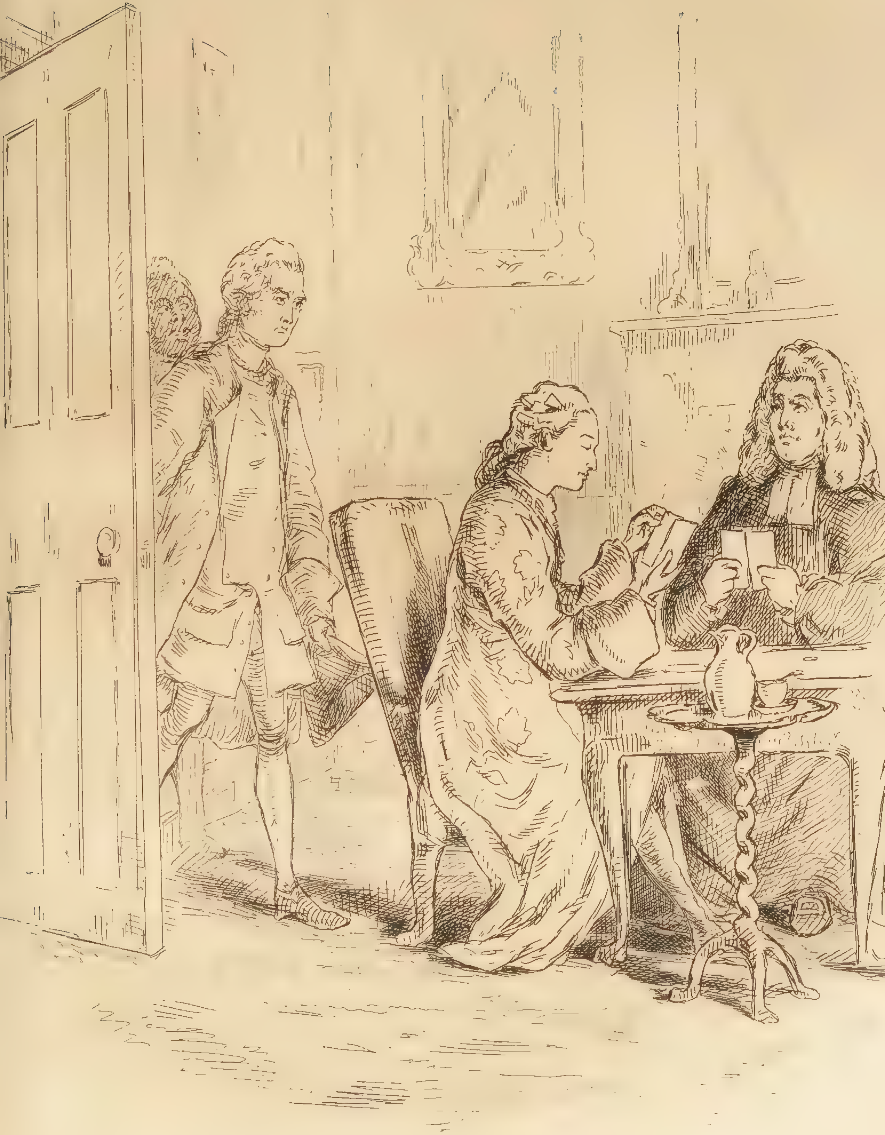
Harry did not like to tell his aunt that afternoon why it was he looked so grave. He thought he would not drink, but there were some jolly fellows at the ordinary who passed the bottle round; and he meant not to play in the evening, but a fourth was wanted at his aunt's table, and how could he resist? He was the old lady's partner several times during the night, and he had Somebody's own luck to be sure; and once more he saw the dawn, and feasted on chickens and champagne at sunrise.

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN WHICH HARRY CONTINUES TO ENJOY OTIUM SINE DIGNITATE.



WHILST there were card-players enough to meet her at her lodgings and the assembly-rooms, Madame de Bernstein remained pretty contentedly at the Wells, scolding her niece, and playing her rubber. At Harry's age almost all places are pleasant, where you can have lively company, fresh air, and your share of sport and diversion. Even all pleasure is pleasant at twenty. We go out to meet it with alacrity, speculate upon its coming, and when its visit is announced, count the days until it and we shall come together. How very gently and coolly we regard it towards the close of Life's long season! Madam, don't you recollect your first ball; and does not your memory stray towards that happy past, sometimes, as you sit ornamenting the wall whilst your daughters are dancing? I, for my part, can remember when I thought it was delightful to walk three miles and back in the country to dine with old Captain Jones. Fancy liking to walk three miles, now, to dine with Jones and drink his half-pay port! No doubt it was bought from the little country-town wine-merchant, and cost but a small sum; but 'twas offered with a



PREACHING & PRACTICE.

kindly welcome, and youth gave it a flavour which no age of wine or man can impart to it now-a-days. *Viximus nuper.* I am not disposed to look so severely upon young Harry's conduct and idleness, as his friend the stern Colonel of the Twentieth Regiment. O blessed Idleness! Divine lazy Nymph! Reach me a novel as I lie in my dressing-gown at three o'clock in the afternoon; compound a sherry-cobbler for me, and bring me a cigar! Dear slatternly, smiling Enchantress! They may assail thee with bad names—swear thy character away, and call thee the Mother of Evil; but, for all that, thou art the best company in the world!

My Lord of March went away to the North; and my Lord Chesterfield, finding the Tunbridge waters did no good to his deafness, returned to his solitude at Blackheath; but other gentlemen remained to sport and take their pleasure, and Mr. Warrington had quite enough of companions at his ordinary at the "White Horse." He soon learned to order a French dinner as well as the best man of fashion out of St. James's; could talk to Monsieur Barbeau, in Monsieur B.'s native language, much more fluently than most other folks,—discovered a very elegant and decided taste in wines, and could distinguish between Clos Vougeot and Romanée with remarkable skill. He was the young King of the Wells, of which the general frequenters were easy-going men of the world, who were by no means shocked at that reputation for gallantry and extravagance which Harry had got, and which had so frightened Mr. Wolfe.

Though our Virginian lived amongst the revellers, and swam and sported in the same waters with the loose fish, the boy had a natural shrewdness and honesty which kept him clear of the snares and baits which are commonly set for the unwary. He made very few foolish bets with the jolly idle fellows round about him, and the oldest hands found it difficult to take him in. He engaged in games out-doors and in, because he had a natural skill and aptitude for them, and was good to hold almost any match with any fair competitor. He was scrupulous to play only with those gentlemen whom he knew, and always to settle his own debts on the spot. He would have made but a very poor figure at a college examination; though he possessed prudence and fidelity, keen, shrewd perception, great generosity, and dauntless personal courage.

And he was not without occasions for showing of what stuff he was made. For instance, when that unhappy little Cattarina, who had brought him into so much trouble, carried her importunities beyond the mark at which Harry thought his generosity should stop; he withdrew from the advances of the Opera-House siren with perfect coolness and skill, leaving her to exercise her blandishments upon some more easy victim. In vain the mermaid's hysterical mother waited upon Harry, and vowed that a cruel bailiff had seized all her daughter's goods for debt, and that her venerable father was at present languishing in a London gaol. Harry declared that between himself and the bailiff there could be no dealings, and that because he had had the good fortune to become known to Mademoiselle Cattarina, and to gratify her caprices by presenting her with various trinkets and knicknacks for which she had a fancy, he was not bound to pay the past debts of her family, and must decline being bail for her papa in London, or settling her outstanding accounts at Tunbridge. The Cattarina's mother first called him a monster and an ingrate, and then asked him with a veteran smirk, why he did not take pay for the services he had rendered to the young person? At first, Mr. Warrington could not understand what the nature of the payment might be: but when that matter was explained by the old woman, the simple lad rose up in horror, to think that a woman should traffic in her child's dishonour, told her that he came from a country where the very savages would recoil from such a bargain; and, having bowed the old lady ceremoniously to the door, ordered Gumbo to mark her well, and never admit her to his lodgings again. No doubt she retired breathing vengeance against the Iroquois: no Turk or Persian, she declared, would treat a lady so: and she and her daughter retreated to London as soon as their anxious landlord would let them. Then Harry had his perils of gaming, as well as his perils of gallantry. A man who plays at bowls, as the phrase is, must expect to meet with rubbers. After dinner at the ordinary, having declined to play picquet any further with Captain Batts, and being roughly asked his reason for refusing, Harry fairly told the Captain that he only played with gentlemen who paid, like himself: but expressed himself so ready to satisfy Mr. Batts, as soon as their outstanding little account was settled, that the Captain declared himself satisfied *d'avance*, and straightway left the Wells without paying Harry or any other creditor. Also he had an occasion to show his spirit by beating a chairman who was rude to old Miss Whiffler one evening as she was going to the assembly: and finding that the calumny regarding himself and that unlucky opera-dancer was repeated by Mr. Hector Buckler, one of the fiercest frequenters of the Wells, Mr. Warrington stepped up to Mr. Buckler in the pump-room, where the latter was regaling a number of water-drinkers with the very calumny, and publicly informed Mr. Buckler that the story was a falsehood, and that he should hold any person accountable to himself who henceforth uttered it. So that though our friend, being at Rome, certainly did as Rome did, yet he showed himself to be a valorous and worthy Roman; and, *hurlant avec les loups*, was acknowledged by Mr. Wolfe himself to be as brave as the best of the wolves.

If that officer had told Colonel Lambert the stories which had given the latter so much pain, we may be sure that when Mr. Wolfe found his young friend was innocent, he took the first opportunity to withdraw the odious charges against him. And there was joy among the Lamberts, in consequence of the lad's acquittal—something, doubtless, of that pleasure, which is felt by higher natures than ours, at the recovery of sinners. Never had the little family been so happy—no, not even when they got the news of Brother Tom winning his scholarship—as when Colonel Wolfe rode over with the account of the conversation which he had with Harry Warrington. "Hadst thou brought me a regiment, James, I think I should not have been better pleased," said Mr. Lambert. Mrs. Lambert called to her daughters who were in the garden, and kissed them both when they came in, and cried out the good news to them. Hetty jumped for joy, and Theo performed some uncommonly brilliant operations upon the harpsichord that night; and when Dr. Boyle came in for his backgammon, he could not, at first, account for the illumination in all their faces, until the three ladies, in a happy chorus, told him how right he had been in his sermon, and how dreadfully they had wronged that poor dear, good young Mr. Warrington.

"What shall we do, my dear?" says the Colonel to his wife. "The hay is in, the corn won't be cut for a fortnight,—the horses have nothing to do. Suppose we . . . " And here he leans over the table and whispers in her ear.

"My dearest Martin! The very thing!" cries Mrs. Lambert, taking her husband's hand and pressing it.

"What's the very thing, mother?" cries young Charley, who is home for his Bartlemytide holidays.

"The very thing is to go to supper. Come, Doctor! We will have a bottle of wine to-night, and drink repentance to all who think evil."

"Amen," says the Doctor; "with all my heart!" And with this the worthy family went to their supper.

CHAPTER XXX.

CONTAINS A LETTER TO VIRGINIA.

HAVING repaired one day to his accustomed dinner at the "White Horse" ordinary, Mr. Warrington was pleased to see amongst the faces round the table the jolly good-looking countenance of Parson Sampson, who was regaling the company when Henry entered, with stories and *bons mots*, which kept them in roars of laughter. Though he had not been in London for some months, the Parson had the latest London news, or what passed for such with the folks at the ordinary: what was doing in the King's house at Kensington; and what in the Duke's in Pall Mall: how Mr. Byng was behaving in prison, and who came to him: what were the odds at Newmarket, and who was the last reigning toast in Covent Garden;—the jolly Chaplain could give the company news upon all these points,—news that might not be very accurate indeed, but was as good as if it were for the country gentlemen who heard it. For suppose that my Lord Viscount Squanderfield was ruining himself for Mrs. Polly, and Sampson called her Mrs. Lucy? that it was Lady Jane who was in love with the actor, and not Lady Mary? that it was Harry Hilton, of the Horse Grenadiers, who had the quarrel with Chevalier Solingen, at Marybone Garden, and not Tommy Ruffler, of the Foot Guards? The names and dates did not matter much. Provided the stories were lively and wicked, their correctness was of no great importance; and Mr. Sampson laughed and chattered away amongst his country gentlemen, charmed them with his spirits and talk, and drank his share of one bottle after another, for which his delighted auditory persisted in calling. A hundred years ago, the *Abbé* Parson, the clergyman who frequented the theatre, the tavern, the race-course, the world of fashion, was no uncommon character in English society: his voice might be heard the loudest in the hunting-field: he could sing the jolliest song at the "Rose" or the "Bedford Head," after the play was over at Covent Garden, and could call a main as well as any at the gaming-table.

It may have been modesty, or it may have been claret, which caused his reverence's rosy face to redden deeper, but when he saw Mr. Warrington enter, he whispered "Maxima debetur" to the laughing country squire who sat next him in his drab coat and gold-laced red waistcoat, and rose up from his chair and ran—nay, stumbled forward—in his haste to greet the Virginian: "My dear sir, my very dear sir, my conqueror of spades, and clubs, and hearts too, I am delighted to see your honour looking so fresh and well," cries the Chaplain.

Harry returned the clergyman's greeting with great pleasure: he was glad to see Mr. Sampson; he could also justly compliment his reverence upon his cheerful looks and rosy gills.

The squire in the drab coat knew Mr. Warrington; he made a place beside himself; he called out to the parson to return to his seat on the other side, and to continue his story about Lord Ogle and the grocer's wife in——, where he did not say, for his sentence was interrupted by a shout and an oath addressed to the parson for treading on his gouty toe.

The Chaplain asked pardon, hurriedly turned round to Mr. Warrington, and informed him, and the rest of the company indeed, that my Lord Castlewood sent his affectionate remembrances to his cousin, and had given special orders to him (Mr. Sampson) to come to Tunbridge Wells and look after the young gentleman's morals; that my Lady Viscountess and my Lady Fanny were gone to Harrogate for the waters; that Mr. Will had won his money at Newmarket, and was going on a visit to my Lord Duke; that Molly the housemaid was crying her eyes out about Gumbo, Mr. Warrington's valet;—in fine, all the news of Castlewood and its neighbourhood. Mr. Warrington was beloved by all the country round, Mr. Sampson told the company, managing to introduce the names of some persons of the very highest rank into his discourse. "All Hampshire had heard of his successes at Tunbridge, successes of every kind," says Mr. Sampson, looking particularly arch; my lord hoped, their ladyships hoped, Harry would not be spoilt for his quiet Hampshire home.

The guests dropped off one by one, leaving the young Virginian to his bottle of wine and the chaplain.

"Though I have had plenty," says the jolly chaplain, "that is no reason why I should not have plenty more," and he drank toast after toast, and bumper after bumper, to the amusement of Harry, who always enjoyed his society.

By the time when Sampson had had his "plenty more," Harry, too, was become specially generous, warm-hearted, and friendly. A lodging?—why should Mr. Sampson go to the expense of an inn, when there was a room at Harry's quarters? The Chaplain's trunk was ordered thither, Gumbo was bidden to make Mr. Sampson comfortable—most comfortable; nothing would satisfy Mr. Warrington but that Sampson should go down to his stables and see his horses: he had several horses now; and when at the stable Sampson recognized his own horse, which Harry had won from him; and the fond beast whinnied with pleasure, and rubbed his nose against his old master's coat. Harry rapped out a brisk energetic expression or two, and vowed by Jupiter that Sampson should have his old horse back again: he would give him to Sampson, that he would; a gift which the Chaplain accepted by seizing Harry's hand, and blessing him, —by flinging his arms round the horse's neck, and weeping for joy there, weeping tears of Bordeaux and gratitude. Arm-in-arm the friends walked to Madame Bernstein's from the stable, of which they brought the odours into her ladyship's apartment. Their flushed cheeks and brightened eyes showed what their amusement had been. Many gentlemen's cheeks were in the habit of flushing in those days, and from the same cause.

Madame Bernstein received her nephew's chaplain kindly enough. The old lady relished Sampson's broad jokes and rattling talk from time to time, as she liked a highly spiced dish or a new entrée composed by her cook, upon its two or three first appearances. The only amusement of which she did not grow tired, she owned, was cards. "The cards don't cheat," she used to say. "A bad hand tells you the truth to your face: and there is nothing so flattering in the world as a good suite of trumps." And when she was in a good humour, and sitting down to her favourite pastime, she would laughingly bid her nephew's chaplain say grace before the meal. Honest Sampson did not at first care to take a hand at Tunbridge Wells. Her ladyship's play was too high for him, he would own, slapping his pocket with a comical piteous look, and its contents had already been handed over to the fortunate youth at Castlewood. Like most persons of her age and indeed her sex, Madame Bernstein was not prodigal of money. I suppose it must have been from Harry Warrington, whose heart was overflowing with generosity as his purse with guineas, that the Chaplain procured a small stock of ready coin, with which he was presently enabled to appear at the card-table.

Our young gentleman welcomed Mr. Sampson to his coin, as to all the rest of the good things which he had gathered about him. 'Twas surprising how quickly the young Virginian adapted himself to the habits of life of the folks amongst whom he lived. His suits were still black, but of the finest cut and quality. "With a star and ribbon, and his stocking down, and his hair over his shoulder, he would make a pretty Hamlet," said the gay old Duchess Queensberry. "And I make no doubt he has been the death of a dozen Ophelias already, here and amongst the Indians," she added, thinking not at all the worse of Harry for his supposed successes among the fair. Harry's lace and linen were as fine as his aunt could desire. He purchased fine shaving-plate of the toy-shop women, and a couple of magnificent brocade bed-gowns, in which his worship lolled at ease, and sipped his chocolate of a morning. He had swords and walking-canes, and French watches with painted backs and diamond settings, and snuff-boxes enamelled by artists of the same cunning nation. He had a levée of grooms, jockeys, tradesmen, daily waiting in his ante-room, and admitted one by one to him and Parson Sampson, over his chocolate, by Gumbo the groom of the chambers. We have no account of the number of men whom Mr. Gumbo now had under him. Certain it is that no single negro could have taken care of all the fine things which Mr. Warrington now possessed, let alone the horses and the post-chaise which his honour had bought. Also Harry instructed himself in the arts which became a gentleman in those days. A French fencing-master, and a dancing-master of the same nation, resided at Tunbridge during that season when Harry made his appearance: these men of science the young Virginian sedulously frequented, and acquired considerable skill and grace in the peaceful and warlike accomplishments which they taught. Ere many weeks were over he could handle the foils against his master or any frequenter of the fencing-school,—and, with a sigh, Lady Maria (who danced very elegantly herself) owned that there was no gentleman at Court who could walk a minuet more gracefully than Mr. Warrington. As for riding, though Mr. Warrington took a few lessons on the great horse from a riding-master who came to Tunbridge, he declared that their own Virginian manner was well enough for him, and that he saw no one amongst the fine folks and the jockeys who could ride better than his friend Colonel George Washington of Mount Vernon.

The obsequious Sampson found himself in better quarters than he had enjoyed for ever so long a time. He knew a great deal of the world, and told a great deal more, and Harry was delighted with his stories, real or fancied. The man of twenty looks up to the man of thirty, admires the latter's old jokes, stale puns, and tarnished anecdotes, that are slopped with the wine of a hundred dinner-tables. Sampson's town and college pleasantries were all new and charming to the young Virginian. A hundred years ago,—no doubt there are no such people left in the world now,—there used to be grown men in London who loved to consort with fashionable youths entering life; to tickle their young fancies with merry stories; to act as Covent Garden Mentors and masters of ceremonies at the Round-house; to accompany lads to the gaming-table, and perhaps have an understanding with the punters; to drink lemonade to Master Hopeful's Burgundy, and to stagger into the streets with perfectly cool heads when my young lord reeled out to beat the watch. Of this, no doubt extinct race, Mr. Sampson was a specimen: and a great comfort it is to think (to those who choose to believe the statement) that in Queen Victoria's reign there are no flatterers left, such as existed in the reign of her royal great-grandfather, no parasites pandering to the follies of young men; in fact, that all the toads have been eaten off the face of the island, (except one or two that are found in stones, where they have lain *perdus* these hundred years,) and the toad-eaters have perished for lack of nourishment.

With some sauce, as I read, the above-mentioned animals are said to be exceedingly fragrant, wholesome, and savoury eating. Indeed, no man could look more rosy and healthy, or flourish more cheerfully, than friend Sampson upon the diet. He became our young friend's confidential leader, and, from the following letter, which is preserved in the Warrington correspondence, it will be seen that Mr. Harry not only had dancing and fencing-masters, but likewise a tutor, chaplain, and secretary :—

"TO MRS. ESMOND WARRINGTON, OF CASTLEWOOD,

"AT HER HOUSE AT RICHMOND, VIRGINIA.

"*Mrs. Bligh's Lodgings, Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells,*
August 25*th*, 1756.

"HONOURED MADAM,—Your honoured letter of 20 June, per Mr. Trail of Bristol, has been forwarded to me duly, and I have to thank your goodness and kindness for the good advice which you are pleased to give me, as also for the remembrances of *dear home*, which I shall love never the worse for having been to the *home of our ancestors in England*.

"I writ you a letter by the last monthly packet, informing my honoured mother of the little accident I had on the road hither, and of the kind friends who I found and whom took me in. Since then I have been profiting of the fine weather and the good company here, and have made many friends among our nobility, whose acquaintance I am sure you will not be sorry that I should make. Among their lordships I may mention the famous Earl of Chesterfield, late Ambassador to Holland, and Viceroy of the Kingdom of Ireland ; the Earl of March and Ruglen, who will be Duke of Queensberry at the death of his Grace ; and her Grace the Duchess, a celebrated beauty of the Queen's time, when she remembers my grandpapa at Court. These and many more persons of the first fashion attend my aunt's assemblies, which are the most crowded at this crowded place. Also on my way hither I stayed at Westerham, at the house of an officer, Lieut.-Gen. Wolfe, who served with my grandfather and General Webb in the famous wars of the Duke of Marlborough. Mr. Wolfe has a son, Lieut.-Col. James Wolfe, engaged to be married to a beautiful lady now in this place, Miss Lowther of the North—and though but 30 years old he is looked up to as much as any officer in the whole army, and hath served with honour under his Royal Highness the Duke wherever our arms have been employed.

"I thank my honoured mother for announcing to me that a quarter's allowance of £52.10 will be paid me by Mr. Trail. I am in no present want of cash, and by practising a rigid economy, which will be necessary (as I do not disguise) for the maintenance of horses, Gumbo, and the equipage and apparel requisite *for a young gentleman of good family*, hope to be able to maintain my credit without unduly trespassing upon yours. The linnen and clothes which I brought with me will with due care last for some years—as you say. 'Tis not quite so fine as worn here by persons of fashion, and I may have to purchase a few *very* fine shirts for *great days :* but those I have are excellent for daily wear.

"I am thankful that I have been quite without occasion to use your excellent family pills. Gumbo hath taken them with great benefit, who grows fat and saucy upon English beef, ale, and air. He sends his humble duty to his mistress, and prays Mrs. Mountain to remember him to all his fellow-servants, especially Dinah and Lily, for whom he has bought posey-rings at Tunbridge Fair.

"Besides partaking of all the pleasures of the place, I hope my honoured mother will believe that I have not been unmindful *of my education.* I have had masters in fencing and dancing, and my Lord Castlewood's chaplain, the Reverend Mr. Sampson, having come hither to drink the waters, has been so good as to take a vacant room at my lodging. Mr. S. breakfasts with me, and we read together of a morning—he saying that I am not *quite such a dunce* as I used to appear at home. We have read in Mr. Rapin's History, Dr. Barrow's Sermons, and for amusement, Shakspeare, Mr. Pope's Homer, and (in French) the translation of an Arabian Work of Tales, very diverting. Several men *of learning* have been staying here besides the persons of fashion; and amongst the former was Mr. Richardson, the author of the famous books which you and Mountain and my dearest brother used to love so. He was pleased when I told him that his works were in your closet in Virginia, and begged me to convey his respectful compliments to my lady mother. Mr. R. is a short fat man, with little of the *fire of genius* visible in his eye or person.

"My aunt and my cousin, the Lady Maria, desire their affectionate compliments to you, and with best regards for Mountain, to whom I enclose a note, I am,

"Honoured Madam,
"Your dutiful Son,
"H. ESMOND WARRINGTON."

Note in Madam Esmond's Handwriting.

"From my son. Received October 15 at Richmond. Sent 16 jars preserved peaches, 224 lbs. best tobacco, 24 finest hams, per "Royal William" of Liverpool, 8 jars peaches, 12 hams for my nephew, the Rt. Honourable the Earl of Castlewood. 4 jars, 6 hams for the Baroness Bernstein, ditto ditto for Mrs. Lambert of Oakhurst, Surrey, and ½ cwt. tobacco. Packet of Infallible Family Pills for Gumbo. My Papa's large silver-gilt shoe-buckles for H., and red silver-laced saddle-cloth.

II. (enclosed in No. I.)

"For Mrs. Mountain.

"What do you *mien*, you silly old Mountain, by sending an order for your poor old divadends dew at Xmas? I'd have you to know I don't want your £7.10, and have *toar your order up* into 1000 *bitts.* I've plenty of money. But I'm *ableaged* to you all same. A kiss to Fanny from

"Your loving
"HARRY."

Note in Madam Esmond's Handwriting.

"This note, which I desired M. to show to me, proves that she *hath a good heart*, and that she wished to show her gratitude to the family, by giving up her half-yearly divd. (on 500*l.* 3 per ct.) to my boy. Hence I reprimanded her *very slightly* for daring to send money to Mr. E. Warrington, unknown to his mother. Note to Mountain not so well spelt as letter to me.

"Mem. to write to Revd. Mr. Sampson desire to know what *theolog.* books he reads with H. Recommend Law, Baxter, Drelincourt.—Request H. to say his catechism to Mr. S., which he has never quite been able to master. By next ship peaches (3), tobacco ½ cwt. Hams for Mr. S."

The mother of the Virginians and her sons have long long since passed away. So how are we to account for the fact, that of a couple of letters sent under one enclosure and by one packet, one should be well spelt, and the other not entirely orthographical? Had Harry found some wonderful instructor, such as exists in the present lucky times, and who would improve his writing in six lessons? My view of the case, after deliberately examining the two notes, is this: No. 1, in which there appears a trifling grammatical slip ("the kind friends *who* I found and *whom* took me in,") must have been re-written from a rough copy which had probably undergone the supervision of a tutor or friend. The more artless composition, No. 2, was not referred to the scholar who prepared No. 1 for the maternal eye, and to whose corrections of "who" and "whom" Mr. Warrington did not pay very close attention. Who knows how he may have been disturbed? A pretty milliner may have attracted Harry's attention out of window—a dancing bear with pipe and tabor may have passed along the common—a jockey come under his windows to show off a horse there? There are some days when any of us may be ungrammatical and spell ill. Finally, suppose Harry did not care to spell so elegantly for Mrs. Mountain as for his lady-mother, what affair is that of the present biographer, century, reader? And as for your objection that Mr. Warrington, in the above communication to his mother, showed some little hypocrisy and reticence in his dealings with that venerable person, I dare say, young folks, you in your time have written more than one prim letter to your papas and mammas in which not quite all the transactions of your lives were narrated, or if narrated, were exhibited in the most favourable light for yourselves—I dare say, old folks! you, in your time, were not altogether more candid. There must be a certain distance between me and my son Jacky. There must be a respectful, an amiable, a virtuous hypocrisy between us. I do not in the least wish that he should treat me as his equal, that he should contradict me, take my arm-chair, read the newspaper first at breakfast, ask unlimited friends to dine when I have a party of my own, and so forth. No; where there is not equality, there must be hypocrisy. Continue to be blind to my faults; to hush still as mice when I fall asleep after dinner; to laugh at my old jokes; to admire my sayings; to be astonished at the impudence of those unbelieving reviewers; to be dear filial humbugs, O my children! In my castle I am king. Let all my royal household back before me. 'Tis not their natural way of walking, I know: but a decorous, becoming, and modest behaviour highly agreeable to me. Away from me they may do, nay, they *do* do, what they like. They may jump, skip, dance, trot, tumble over head and heels, and kick about freely, when they are out of the presence of my majesty. Do not then, my dear young friends, be surprised at your mother and aunt when they cry out, "Oh, it was highly immoral and improper of Mr. Warrington to be writing home humdrum demure letters to his dear mamma, when he was playing all sorts of merry pranks!"—but drop a curtsey, and say, "Yes, dear grandmamma, (or aunt, as may be,) it was very wrong of him: and I suppose you never had your fun when *you* were young." Of course, she didn't! And the sun never shone, and the blossoms never budded, and the blood never danced, and the fiddles never sang, in her spring-time. *Eh, Babet! mon lait de poule et mon bonnet de nuit!* Ho, Betty! my gruel and my slippers! And go, ye frisky, merry little souls! and dance, and have your merry little supper of cakes and ale!

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE BEAR AND THE LEADER.

OUR candid readers know the real state of the case regarding Harry Warrington and that luckless Cattarina; but a number of the old ladies at Tunbridge Wells supposed the Virginian to be as dissipated as any young English nobleman of the highest quality, and Madame de Bernstein was especially incredulous about her nephew's innocence. It was the old lady's firm belief that Harry was leading not only a merry life but a wicked one, and her wish was father to the thought that the lad might be no better than his neighbours. An old Roman herself, she liked her nephew to do as Rome did. All the scandal regarding Mr. Warrington's Lovelace adventures she eagerly and complacently accepted. We have seen how, on one or two occasions, he gave tea and music to the company at the Wells; and he was so gallant and amiable to the ladies (to ladies of a much better figure and character than the unfortunate Cattarina), that Madame Bernstein ceased to be disquieted regarding the silly love affair which had had a commencement at Castlewood, and relaxed in her vigilance over Lady Maria.

Some folks—many old folks—are too selfish to interest themselves long about the affairs of their neighbours. The Baroness had her trumps to think of, her dinners, her twinges of rheumatism: and her suspicions regarding Maria and Harry, lately so lively, now dozed, and kept a careless, unobservant watch. She may have thought that the danger was over, or she may have ceased to care whether it existed or not, or that artful Maria, by her conduct, may have quite cajoled, soothed, and misguided the old Dragon, to whose charge she was given over. At Maria's age, nay, earlier indeed, maidens have learnt to be very sly, and at Madame Bernstein's time of life, dragons are not so fierce and alert. They cannot turn so readily, some of their old teeth have dropped out, and their eyes require more sleep than they needed in days when they were more active, venomous, and dangerous. I, for my part, know a few female dragons *de par le monde*, and as I watch them and remember what they were, admire the softening influence of years upon these whilom destroyers of man and womankind. Their scales are so soft that any knight with a moderate power of thrust can strike them: their claws, once strong enough to tear out a thousand eyes, only fall with a feeble pat that scarce raises the skin: their tongues, from their toothless old gums, dart a venom which is rather disagreeable than deadly. See them trailing their languid tails, and crawling home to their caverns at roosting time! How weak are their powers of doing injury! their maleficence how feeble! How changed are they since the brisk days when their eyes shot wicked fire; their tongue spat poison; their breath blasted reputation; and they gobbled up a daily victim at least!

If the good folks at Oakhurst could not resist the testimony which was brought to them regarding Harry's ill-doings, why should Madam Bernstein, who in the course of her long days had had more experience of evil than all the Oakhurst family put together, be less credulous than they? Of course every single old woman of her ladyship's society believed every story that was told about Mr. Harry Warrington's dissipated habits, and was ready to believe as much more ill of him as you please. When the little dancer went back to London, as she did, it was because that heartless Harry deserted her. He deserted her for somebody else, whose name was confidently given, —whose name!—whose half-dozen names the society at Tunbridge Wells would whisper about; where there congregated people of all ranks and degrees, women of fashion, women of reputation, of demi-reputation, of virtue, of no virtue,—all mingling in the same rooms, dancing to the same fiddles, drinking out of the same glasses at the Wells, and alike in search of health, or society, or pleasure. A century ago, and our ancestors, the most free or the most strait-laced, met together at a score of such merry places as that where our present scene lies, and danced, and frisked, and gamed, and drank at Epsom, Bath, Tunbridge, Harrogate, as they do at Hombourg and Baden now.

Harry's bad reputation then comforted his old aunt exceedingly, and eased her mind in respect to the boy's passion for Lady Maria. So easy was she in her mind, that when the chaplain said he came to escort her ladyship home, Madame Bernstein did not even care to part from her niece. She preferred rather to keep her under her eye, to talk to her about her wicked young cousin's wild extravagances, to whisper to her that boys would be boys, to confide to Maria her intention of getting a proper wife for Harry,—some one of a suitable age,—some one with a suitable fortune,—all which pleasantries poor Maria had to bear with as much fortitude as she could muster.

There lived, during the last century, a certain French duke and marquis, who distinguished himself in Europe, and America likewise, and has obliged posterity by leaving behind him a choice volume of memoirs, which the gentle reader is specially warned not to consult. Having performed the part of Don Juan in his own country, in ours, and in other parts of Europe, he has kindly noted down the names of many court-beauties who fell victims to his powers of fascination; and very pleasant reading no doubt it must be for the grandsons and descendants of the fashionable persons amongst whom our brilliant nobleman moved, to find the names of their ancestresses adorning M. le Duc's sprightly pages, and their frailties recorded by the candid writer who caused them.

In the course of the peregrinations of this nobleman, he visited North America, and, as had been his custom in Europe, proceeded straightway to fall in love. And curious it is to contrast the elegant refinements of European society, where, according to Monseigneur, he had but to lay siege to a woman in order to vanquish her, with the simple lives and habits of the colonial folks, amongst whom this European enslaver of hearts did not, it appears, make a single conquest. Had he done so, he would as certainly have narrated his victories in Pennsylvania and New England, as he described his successes in this and his own country. Travellers in America have cried out quite loudly enough against the rudeness and barbarism of Transatlantic manners; let the present writer give the humble testimony of his experience that the conversation of American gentlemen is generally modest, and, to the best of his belief, the lives of the women pure.

We have said that Mr. Harry Warrington brought his colonial modesty along with him to the old country; and though he could not help hearing the free talk of the persons amongst whom he lived, and who were men of pleasure and the world, he sat pretty silent himself in the midst of their rattle; never indulged in *double entendre* in his conversation with women; had no victories over the sex to boast of; and was shy and awkward when he heard such narrated by others.

This youthful modesty Mr. Sampson had remarked during his intercourse with the lad at Castlewood, where Mr. Warrington had more than once shown himself quite uneasy whilst Cousin Will was telling some of his choice stories; and my lord had curtly rebuked his brother, bidding him keep his jokes for the usher's table at Kensington, and not give needless offence to their kinsman. Hence the exclamation of "Reverentia pueris," which the Chaplain had addressed to his neighbour at the ordinary on Harry's first appearance there. Mr. Sampson, if he had not strength sufficient to do right himself, at least had grace enough not to offend innocent young gentlemen by his cynicism.

The Chaplain was touched by Harry's gift of the horse; and felt a genuine friendliness towards the lad. "You see, sir," says he, "I am of the world, and must do as the rest of the world does. I have led a rough life, Mr. Warrington, and can't afford to be more particular than my neighbours. Video meliora, deteriora sequor, as we said at college. I have got a little sister, who is at boarding-school, not very far from here, and, as I keep a decent tongue in my head when I am talking with my little Patty, and expect others to do as much, sure I may try and do as much by you."

The Chaplain was loud in his praises of Harry to his aunt, the old Baroness. She liked to hear him praised. She was as fond of him as she could be of anything; was pleased in his company, with his good looks, his manly courageous bearing, his blushes, which came so readily, his bright eyes, his deep youthful voice. His shrewdness and simplicity constantly amused her; she would have wearied of him long before, had he been clever, or learned, or witty, or other than he was. "We must find a good wife for him, chaplain," she said to Mr. Sampson. "I have one or two in my eye, who, I think, will suit him. We must set him up here; he never will bear going back to his savages again, or to live with his little Methodist of a mother."

Now about this point Mr. Sampson, too, was personally anxious, and had also a wife in his eye for Harry. I suppose he must have had some conversations with his lord at Castlewood, whom we have heard expressing some intention of complimenting his chaplain with a good living or other provision, in event of his being able to carry out his lordship's wishes regarding a marriage for Lady Maria. If his good offices could help that anxious lady to a husband, Sampson was ready to employ them: and he now waited to see in what most effectual manner he could bring his influence to bear.

Sampson's society was most agreeable, and he and his young friend were intimate in the course of a few hours. The parson rejoiced in high spirits, good appetite, good humour; pretended to no sort of squeamishness, and indulged in no sanctified hypocritical conversation; nevertheless, he took care not to shock his young friend by any needless outbreaks of levity or immorality of talk, initiating his pupil, perhaps from policy, perhaps from compunction, only into the minor mysteries, as it were; and not telling him the secrets with which the unlucky adept himself was only too familiar. With Harry, Sampson was only a brisk, lively, jolly companion, ready for any drinking bout, or any sport, a cock-fight, a shooting-match, a game at cards, or a gallop across the common; but his conversation was decent, and he tried much more to amuse the young man, than to lead him astray. The Chaplain was quite successful: he had immense animal spirits as well as natural wit, and aptitude as well as experience in that business of toad-eater which had been his calling and livelihood from his very earliest years,—ever since he first entered college as a servitor, and cast about to see by whose means he could make his fortune in life. That was but satire just now, when we said there were no toad-eaters left in the world. There are many men of Sampson's profession now, doubtless; nay, little boys at our public schools are sent thither at the earliest age, instructed by their parents, and put out apprentices to toad-eating. But the flattery is not so manifest as it used to be a hundred years since. Young men and old have hangers-on, and led-captains, but they assume an appearance of equality, borrow money, or swallow their toads in private, and walk abroad arm-in-arm with the great man, and call him by his name without his title. In those good old times, when Harry Warrington first came to Europe, a gentleman's toad-eater pretended to no airs of equality at all; openly paid court to his patron, called him by that name to other folks, went on his errands for him,—any sort of errands which the patron might devise,—called him Sir in speaking to him, stood up in his presence until bidden to sit down, and flattered him *ex officio.* Mr. Sampson did not take the least shame in speaking of Harry as his young patron,—as a young Virginian nobleman recommended to him by his other noble patron, the Earl of Castlewood. He was proud of appearing at Harry's side, and as his humble retainer, in public talked about him to the company, gave orders to Harry's tradesmen, from whom, let us hope, he received a per-centage in return for his recommendations, performed all the functions of aide-de-camp—others, if our young gentleman demanded them from the obsequious divine, who had gaily discharged the duties of *ami du prince* to ever so many young men of fashion, since his own entrance into the world. It must be confessed that, since his arrival in Europe, Mr. Warrington had not been uniformly lucky in the friendships which he had made.

"What a reputation, sir, they have made for you in this place!" cries Mr. Sampson, coming back from the coffee-house to his patron. "Monsieur de Richelieu was nothing to you!"

"How do you mean, Monsieur de Richelieu?—Never was at Minorca in my life," says downright Harry, who had not heard of those victories at home which made the French duke famous.

Mr. Sampson explained. The pretty widow Patcham who had just arrived was certainly desperate about Mr. Warrington: her way of going on at the rooms, the night before, proved that. As for Mrs. Hooper, that was a known case, and the Alderman had fetched his wife back to London for no other reason. It was the talk of the whole Wells.

"Who says so?" cries out Harry, indignantly. "I should like to meet the man who dares say so, and confound the villain!"

"I should not like to show him to you," says Mr. Sampson, laughing. "It might be the worse for him."

"It's a shame to speak with such levity about the character of ladies or of gentlemen, either," continues Mr. Warrington, pacing up and down the room in a fume.

"So I told them," says the Chaplain, wagging his head and looking very much moved and very grave, though, if the truth were known, it had never come into his mind at all to be angry at hearing charges of this nature against Harry.

"It's a shame, I say, to talk away the reputation of any man or woman as people do here. Do you know, in our country, a fellow's ears would not be safe; and a little before I left home, three brothers shot down a man, for having spoken ill of their sister."

"Serve the villain right!" cries Sampson.

"Already they have had that calumny about me set a-going here, Sampson,—about me and the poor little French dancing-girl."

"I have heard," says Mr. Sampson, shaking powder out of his wig.

"Wicked; wasn't it?"

"Abominable."

"They said the very same thing about my Lord March. Isn't it shameful?"

"Indeed it is," says Mr. Sampson, preserving a face of wonderful gravity.

"I don't know what I should do if these stories were to come to my mother's ears. It would break her heart, I do believe it would. Why, only a few days before you came, a military friend of mine, Mr. Wolfe, told me how the most horrible lies were circulated about me. Good heavens! What do they think a gentleman of my name and country can be capable of—I a seducer of women? They might as well say I was a horse-stealer or a housebreaker. I vow if I hear any man say so, I'll have his ears!"

"I have read, sir, that the Grand Seignior of Turkey has bushels of ears sometimes sent in to him," says Mr. Sampson, laughing. "If you took all those that had heard scandal against you or others, what baskets you would fill!"

"And so I would, Sampson, as soon as look at 'em:—any fellow's who said a word against a lady or a gentleman of honour!" cries the Virginian.

"If you'll go down to the Well, you'll find a harvest of 'em. I just came from there. It was the high tide of Scandal. Detraction was at its height. And you may see the *nymphas discentes* and the *aures satyrorum acutas*," cries the Chaplain, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"That may be as you say, Sampson," Mr. Warrington replies; "but if ever I hear any man speak against my character I'll punish him. Mark that."

"I shall be very sorry for his sake, that I should; for you'll mark him in a way he won't like, sir; and I know you are a man of your word."

"You may be sure of that, Sampson. And now shall we go to dinner, and afterwards to my Lady Trumpington's tea?"

"You know, sir, I can't resist a card or a bottle," says Mr. Sampson. "Let us have the last first and then the first shall come last." And with this the two gentlemen went off to their accustomed place of refection.

That was an age in which wine-bibbing was more common than in our politer time; and, especially since the arrival of General Braddock's army in his native country, our young Virginian had acquired rather a liking for the filling of bumpers and the calling of toasts; having heard that it was a point of honour among the officers never to decline a toast or a challenge. So Harry and his chaplain drank their claret in peace and plenty, naming, as the simple custom was, some favourite lady with each glass.

The Chaplain had reasons of his own for desiring to know how far the affair between Harry and my Lady Maria had gone; whether it was advancing, or whether it was ended; and he and his young friend were just warm enough with the claret to be able to talk with that great eloquence, that candour, that admirable friendliness, which good wine taken in a rather injudicious quantity inspires. O kindly harvests of the Acquitanian grape! O sunny banks of Garonne! O friendly caves of Gledstane, where the dusky flasks lie recondite! May we not say a word of thanks for all the pleasure we owe you? Are the Temperance men to be allowed to shout in the public places? are the Vegetarians to bellow "Cabbage for ever?" and may we modest Œnophilists not sing the praises of our favourite plant? After the drinking of good Bordeaux wine, there is a point (I do not say a pint) at which men arrive, when all the generous faculties of the soul are awakened and in full vigour; when the wit brightens and breaks out in sudden flashes; when the intellects are keenest; when the pent-up words and confined thoughts get a night-rule, and rush abroad and disport themselves; when the kindest affections come out and shake hands with mankind, and the timid Truth jumps up naked out of his well and proclaims himself to all the world. How, by the kind influence of the wine-cup, we succour the poor and humble! How bravely we rush to the rescue of the oppressed! I say, in the face of all the pumps which ever spouted, that there is a moment in a bout of good wine at which, if a man could but remain, wit, wisdom, courage, generosity, eloquence, happiness, were his; but the moment passes, and that other glass somehow spoils the state of beatitude. There is a headache in the morning; we are not going into Parliament for our native town; we are not going to shoot those French officers who have been speaking disrespectfully of our country; and poor Jeremy Diddler calls about eleven o'clock for another half-sovereign, and we are unwell in bed, and can't see him, and send him empty away.

Well, then, as they sat over their generous cups, the company having departed, and the —th bottle of claret being brought in by Monsieur Barbeau, the Chaplain found himself in an eloquent state, with a strong desire for inculcating sublime moral precepts, whilst Harry was moved by an extreme longing to explain his whole private history, and impart all his present feelings to his new friend. Mark that fact. Why *must* a man say everything that comes uppermost in his noble mind because, forsooth, he has swallowed a half-pint more of wine than he ordinarily drinks? Suppose I had committed a murder (of course I allow the sherry and champagne at dinner), should I announce that homicide somewhere about the third bottle (in a small party of men) of claret at dessert? Of course: and hence the fidelity of water-gruel announced a few pages back.

"I am glad to hear what your conduct has really been with regard to the Cattarina, Mr. Warrington; I am glad from my soul," says the impetuous Chaplain. "The wine is with you. You have shown that you can bear down calumny, and resist temptation. Ah! my dear sir, men are not all so fortunate. What famous good wine this is!" and he sucks up a glass with "A toast from you, my dear sir, if you please!"

"I give you 'Miss Fanny Mountain, of Virginia,'" says Mr. Warrington, filling a bumper as his thoughts fly straightway, ever so many thousand miles, to home.

"One of your American conquests, I suppose?" says the Chaplain.

"Nay, she is but ten years old, and I have never made any conquests at all in Virginia, Mr. Sampson," says the young gentleman.

"You are like a true gentleman, and don't kiss and tell, sir."

"I neither kiss nor tell. It isn't the custom of our country, Sampson, to ruin girls, or frequent the society of low women. We Virginian gentlemen honour women: we don't wish to bring them to shame," cries the young toper, looking very proud and handsome. "The young lady whose name I mentioned hath lived in our family since her infancy, and I would shoot the man who did her a wrong;—by heaven, I would!"

"Your sentiments do you honour! Let me shake hands with you! I *will* shake hands with you, Mr. Warrington," cried the enthusiastic Sampson. "And let me tell you, 'tis the grasp of honest friendship offered you, and not merely the poor retainer paying court to the wealthy patron. No! with such liquor as this, all men are equal;—faith, all men are rich, whilst it lasts! and Tom Sampson is as wealthy with his bottle as your honour with all the acres of your principality!"

"Let us have another bottle of riches," says Harry, with a laugh. "Encore du cachet jaune, mon bon Monsieur Barbeau!" and exit Monsieur Barbeau to the caves below.

"Another bottle of riches! Capital, capital! How beautifully you speak French, Mr. Harry."

"I *do* speak it well," says Harry. "At least, when I speak Monsieur Barbeau understands me well enough."

"You do everything well, I think. You succeed in whatever you try. That is why they have fancied here you have won the hearts of so many women, sir."

"There you go again about the women! I tell you I don't like these stories about women. Confound me, Sampson, why is a gentleman's character to be blackened so?"

"Well, at any rate, there is one, unless my eyes deceive me very much indeed, sir!" cries the Chaplain.

"Whom do you mean?" asked Harry, flushing very red.

"Nay. I name no names. It isn't for a poor chaplain to meddle with his betters' doings, or to know their thoughts," says Mr. Sampson.

"Thoughts! *what* thoughts, Sampson?"

"I fancied I saw, on the part of a certain lovely and respected lady at Castlewood, a preference exhibited. I fancied, on the side of a certain distinguished young gentleman, a strong liking manifested itself: but I may have been wrong, and ask pardon."

"Oh, Sampson, Sampson!" broke out the young man. "I tell you I am miserable. I tell you I have been longing for some one to confide in, or ask advice of. You *do* know, then, that there has been something going on—something between me and—help, Mr. Sampson, Monsieur Barbeau—and—some one else?"

"I have watched it this month past," says the Chaplain.

"Confound me, sir, do you mean you have been a spy on me?" says the other hotly.

"A spy! You made little disguise of the matter, Mr. Warrington, and her ladyship wasn't a much better hand at deceiving. You were always together. In the shrubberies, in the walks, in the village, in the galleries of the house,—you always found a pretext for being together, and plenty of eyes besides mine watched you."

"Gracious powers! What *did* you see, Sampson?" cries the lad.

"Nay, sir, 'tis forbidden to kiss and tell. I say so again," says the Chaplain.

The young man turned very red. "Oh, Sampson!" he cried, "can I—can I confide in you?"

"Dearest sir—dear generous youth—you know I would shed my heart's blood for you!" exclaims the Chaplain, squeezing his patron's hand, and turning a brilliant pair of eyes ceiling-wards.

"Oh, Sampson! I tell you I am miserable. With all this play and wine, whilst I have been here, I tell you I have been trying to drive away care. I own to you that when we were at Castlewood there was things passed between a certain lady and me."

The parson gave a slight whistle over his glass of Bordeaux.

"And they've made me wretched, those things have. I mean, you see, that if a gentleman has given his word, why, it's his word, and he must stand by it, you know. I mean that I thought I loved her,—and so I do very much, and she's a most dear, kind, darling, affectionate creature, and very handsome, too,—quite beautiful; but then, you know, our ages, Sampson! Think of our ages, Sampson! She's as old as my mother!"

"Who would never forgive you?"

"I don't intend to let anybody meddle in my affairs, not Madam Esmond nor anybody else," cries Harry: "but you see, Sampson, she *is* old—and, oh, hang it! Why did Aunt Bernstein tell me——?"

"Tell you what?"

"Something I can't divulge to anybody, something that tortures me!"

"Not about the—the——" the Chaplain paused: he was going to say about her ladyship's little affair with the French dancing-master; about other little anecdotes affecting her character. But he had not drunk wine enough to be quite candid, or too much, and was past the real moment of virtue.

"Yes, yes, every one of 'em false—every one of 'em!" shrieks out Harry.

"Great powers, what do you mean?" asks his friend.

"These, sir, these!" says Harry, beating a tattoo on his own white teeth. "I didn't know it when I asked her. I swear I didn't know it. Oh, it's horrible—it's horrible! and it has caused me nights of agony, Sampson. My dear old grandfather had a set, a Frenchman at Charleston made them for him, and we used to look at 'em grinning in a tumbler, and when they were out, his jaws used to fall in—I never thought *she* had 'em."

"Had *what*, sir?" again asked the Chaplain.

"Confound it, sir, don't you see I mean *teeth?*" says Harry, rapping the table.

"Nay, only two."

"And how the devil do you know, sir?" asks the young man, fiercely.

"I—I had it from her maid. She had two teeth knocked out by a stone which cut her lip a little, and they have been replaced."

"Oh, Sampson, do you mean to say they ain't *all* sham ones?" cries the boy.

"But two, sir, at least so Peggy told me, and she would just as soon have blabbed about the whole two and thirty—the rest are as sound as yours, which are beautiful."

"And her hair, Sampson, is that all right, too?" asks the young gentleman.

"'Tis lovely—I have seen that. I can take my oath to that. Her ladyship can sit upon it; and her figure is very fine; and her skin is as white as snow; and her heart is the kindest that ever was; and I know, that is I feel sure, it is very tender about you, Mr. Warrington."

"Oh, Sampson! heaven—heaven bless you! What a weight you've taken off my mind with those—those—never mind them! Oh, Sam! How happy—that is, no, no—oh, how miserable I am! She's as old as Madam Esmond—by George she is—she's as old as my mother. You wouldn't have a fellow marry a woman as old as his mother? It's too bad: by George it is. It's too bad." And here, I am sorry to say, Harry Esmond Warrington, Esquire, of Castlewood, in Virginia, began to cry. The delectable point, you see, must have been passed several glasses ago.

"You don't want to marry her, then?" asks the Chaplain.

"What's that to you, sir? I've promised her, and an Esmond—a *Virginia* Esmond, mind that—Mr. What's your name—Sampson—has but his word!" The sentiment was noble, but delivered by Harry with rather a doubtful articulation.

"Mind you, I said a Virginia Esmond," continued poor Harry, lifting up his finger, "I don't mean the younger branch here. I don't mean Will, who robbed me about the horse, and whose bones I'll break. I give you Lady Maria—heaven bless her, and heaven bless *you*, Sampson, and you deserve to be a bishop, old boy!"

"There are letters between you, I suppose?" says Sampson.

"Letters! Dammy, she's always writing me letters!—never gets me into a window but she sticks one in my cuff. Letters, that *is* a good idea. Look here! Here's letters!" And he threw down a pocket-book containing a heap of papers of the poor lady's composition.

"Those *are* letters, indeed. What a post-bag!" says the Chaplain.

"But any man who touches them—dies—dies on the spot!" shrieks Harry, starting from his seat, and reeling towards his sword; which he draws, and then stamps with his foot, and says, "Ha! ha!"

and then lunges at M. Barbeau, who skips away from the lunge behind the Chaplain, who looks rather alarmed. And in my mind I behold an exciting picture of the lad, with his hair dishevelled, raging about the room *flamberge au vent*, and pinking the affrighted innkeeper and chaplain. But oh, to think of him stumbling over a stool, and prostrated by an enemy who has stole away his brains! Come, Gumbo! and help your master to bed!

CHAPTER XXXII.

IN WHICH A FAMILY COACH IS ORDERED.

OUR pleasing duty now is to divulge the secret which Mr. Lambert whispered in his wife's ear at the close of the antepenultimate chapter, and the publication of which caused such great pleasure to the whole of the Oakhurst family. As the hay was in, the corn not ready for cutting, and by consequence the farm horses disengaged, why, asked Colonel Lambert, should they not be put into the coach, and should we not all pay a visit to Tunbridge Wells, taking friend Wolfe at Westerham on our way?

Mamma embraced this proposal, and I dare say the gentleman who made it. All the children jumped for joy. The girls went off straightway to get their best calamancoes, paduasoys, falbalas, furbelows, capes, cardinals, sacks, negligées, solitaires, caps, ribbons, mantuas, clocked stockings, and high-heeled shoes, and I know not what articles of toilette. Mamma's best robes were taken from the presses, whence they only issued on rare solemn occasions, retiring immediately afterwards to lavender and seclusion; the brave Colonel produced his laced hat and waistcoat and silver-hilted hanger; Charley rejoiced in a *rasée* holiday suit of his father's, in which the Colonel had been married, and which Mrs. Lambert cut up, not without a pang. Ball and Dumpling had their tails and manes tied with ribbon, and Chump, the old white cart-horse, went as unicorn leader, to help the carriage-horses up the first hilly five miles of the road from Oakhurst to

Westerham. The carriage was an ancient vehicle, and was believed to have served in the procession which had brought George I. from Greenwich to London, on his first arrival to assume the sovereignty of these realms. It had belonged to Mr. Lambert's father, and the family had been in the habit of regarding it, ever since they could remember anything, as one of the most splendid coaches in the three kingdoms. Brian, coachman, and—must it also be owned?—ploughman, of the Oakhurst family, had a place on the box, with Mr. Charley by his side. The precious clothes were packed in imperials on the roof. The Colonel's pistols were put in the pockets of the carriage, and the blunderbuss hung behind the box, in reach of Brian, who was an old soldier. No highwayman, however, molested the convoy; not even an innkeeper levied contributions on Colonel Lambert, who, with a slender purse and a large family, was not to be plundered by those or any other depredators on the king's highway; and a reasonable cheap modest lodging had been engaged for them by young Colonel Wolfe, at the house where he was in the habit of putting up, and whither he himself accompanied them on horseback.

It happened that these lodgings were opposite Madame Bernstein's; and as the Oakhurst family reached their quarters on a Saturday evening, they could see chair after chair discharging powdered beaux and patched and brocaded beauties at the Baroness's door, who was holding one of her many card-parties. The sun was not yet down, (for our ancestors began their dissipations at early hours, and were at meat, drink, or cards, any time after three o'clock in the afternoon until any time in the night or morning,) and the young country ladies and their mother from their window could see the various personages as they passed into the Bernstein rout. Colonel Wolfe told the ladies who most of the characters were. 'Twas almost as delightful as going to the party themselves, Hetty and Theo thought, for they not only could see the guests arriving, but look into the Baroness's open casements and watch many of them there. Of a few of the personages we have before had a glimpse. When the Duchess of Queensberry passed, and Mr. Wolfe explained who she was, Martin Lambert was ready with a score of lines about "Kitty, beautiful and young," from his favourite Mat Prior.

"Think that that old lady was once like you, girls!" cries the Colonel.

"Like us, papa? Well, certainly we never set up for being beauties!" says Miss Hetty, tossing up her little head.

"Yes, like you, you little baggage; like you at this moment, who want to go to that drum yonder:—

'Inflamed with rage at sad restraint
Which wise mamma ordained,
And sorely vexed to play the saint
Whilst wit and beauty reigned.'"

"We were never invited, papa; and I am sure if there's no beauty more worth seeing than that, the wit can't be much worth the hearing," again says the satirist of the family.

"Oh, but he's a rare poet, Mat Prior!" continues the Colonel; "though, mind you, girls, you'll skip over all the poems I have marked with a cross. A rare poet! and to think you should see one of his heroines! 'Fondness prevailed, mamma gave way' (she always will, Mrs. Lambert!)—

'Fondness prevailed, mamma gave way,—
Kitty at heart's desire
Obtained the chariot for a day,
And set the world on fire!'"

"I am sure it must have been very inflammable," says mamma.

"So it was, my dear, twenty years ago, much more inflammable than it is now," remarks the Colonel.

"Nonsense, Mr. Lambert," is mamma's answer.

"Look, look!" cries Hetty, running forward and pointing to the little square, and the covered gallery, where was the door leading to Madame Bernstein's apartment, and round which stood a crowd of street urchins, idlers and yokels, watching the company.

"It's Harry Warrington!" exclaims Theo, waving a handkerchief to the young Virginian: but Warrington did not see Miss Lambert. The Virginian was walking arm-in-arm with a portly clergyman in a crisp rustling silk gown, and the two went into Madame de Bernstein's door.

"I heard him preach a most admirable sermon here last Sunday," says Mr. Wolfe; "a little theatrical, but most striking and eloquent."

"You seem to be here most Sundays, James," says Mrs. Lambert.

"And Monday, and so on till Saturday," adds the Colonel. "See, Harry has beautified himself already, hath his hair in buckle, and I have no doubt is going to the drum too."

"I had rather sit quiet generally of a Saturday evening," says sober Mr. Wolfe; "at any rate away from card-playing and scandal; but I own, dear Mrs. Lambert, I am under orders. Shall I go across the way and send Mr. Warrington to you?"

"No, let him have his sport. We shall see him to-morrow. He won't care to be disturbed amidst his fine folks by us country people," said meek Mrs. Lambert.

"I am glad he is with a clergyman who preaches so well," says Theo, softly; and her eyes seemed to say, You see, good people, he is not so bad as you thought him, and as I, for my part, never believed him to be. "The clergyman has a very kind, handsome face."

"Here comes a greater clergyman," cries Mr. Wolfe. "It is my Lord of Salisbury, with his blue ribbon, and a chaplain behind him."

"And whom a mercy's name have we here?" breaks in Mrs. Lambert, as a sedan-chair, covered with gilding, topped with no less than five earl's coronets, carried by bearers in richly laced clothes, and preceded by three footmen in the same splendid livery, now came up to Madame de Bernstein's door. The Bishop, who had been about to enter, stopped, and ran back with the most respectful bows and curtseys to the sedan-chair, giving his hand to the lady who stepped thence.

"Who on earth is this?" asks Mrs. Lambert.

"Sprechen sie Deutsch. Ja, Meinherr. Nichts verstand," says the waggish Colonel.

"Pooh, Martin."

"Well, if you can't understand High Dutch, my love, how can I help it? Your education was neglected at school. Can you understand heraldry—I know you can?"

"I make," cries Charley, reciting the shield, "three merions on a field *or*, with an earl's coronet."

"A countess's coronet, my son. The Countess of Yarmouth, my son."

"And pray who is she?"

"It hath ever been the custom of our sovereigns to advance persons of distinction to honour," continues the Colonel, gravely, "and this eminent lady hath been so promoted by our gracious monarch to the rank of Countess of this kingdom."

"But why, papa?" asked the daughters together.

"Never mind, girls!" said mamma.

But that incorrigible Colonel would go on.

"Y, my children, is one of the last and the most awkward letters of the whole alphabet. When I tell you stories, you are always saying Why. Why should my Lord Bishop be cringing to that lady? Look at him rubbing his fat hands together, and smiling into her face! It's not a handsome face any longer. It is all painted red and white like Scaramouch's in the pantomime. See, there comes another blue-riband, as I live. My Lord Bamborough. The descendant of the Hotspurs. The proudest man in England. He stops, he bows, he smiles; he is hat in hand, too. See, she taps him with her fan. Get away, you crowd of little blackguard boys, and don't tread on the robe of the lady whom the King delights to honour."

"But why does the King honour her?" ask the girls, once more.

"There goes that odious last letter but one! Did you ever hear of her Grace the Duchess of Kendal? No. Of the Duchess of Portsmouth? Non plus. Of the Duchess of La Vallière? Of Fair Rosamond, then?"

"Hush, papa! There is no need to bring blushes on the cheeks of my dear ones, Martin Lambert!" said the mother, putting her finger to her husband's lip.

"'Tis not I; it is their sacred Majesties who are the cause of the shame," cries the son of the old republican. "Think of the bishops of the Church and the proudest nobility of the world cringing and bowing before that painted High Dutch Jezebel. Oh, it's a shame, a shame!"

"Confusion!" here broke out Colonel Wolfe, and, making a dash at his hat, ran from the room. He had seen the young lady whom he admired and her guardian walking across the Pantiles on foot to the Baroness's party, and they came up whilst the Countess of Yarmouth-Walmoden was engaged in conversation with the two lords spiritual and temporal, and these two made the lowest reverences and bows to the Countess, and waited until she had passed in at the door on the Bishop's arm.

Theo turned away from the window with a sad, almost awe-stricken face. Hetty still remained there, looking from it with indignation in her eyes, and a little red spot on each cheek.

"A penny for little Hetty's thoughts," says mamma, coming to the window to lead the child away.

"I am thinking what I should do if I saw papa bowing to that woman," says Hetty.

Tea and a hissing kettle here made their appearance, and the family sat down to partake of their evening meal,—leaving, however, Miss Hetty, from their place, command of the window, which she begged her brother not to close. That young gentleman had been down amongst the crowd to inspect the armorial bearings of the Countess's and other sedans, no doubt, and also to invest sixpence in a cheese-cake, by mamma's order and his own desire, and he returned presently with this delicacy wrapped up in a paper.

"Look, mother," he comes back and says, "do you see that big man in brown beating all the pillars with a stick? That is the learned Mr. Johnson. He comes to the Friars sometimes to see our master. He was sitting with some friends just now at the tea-table before Mrs. Brown's tart-shop. They have tea there, twopence a cup; I heard Mr. Johnson say he had had seventeen cups—that makes two-and-tenpence—what a *sight* of money for tea!"

"What would you have, Charley?" asks Theo.

"I think I would have cheese-cakes," says Charley, sighing, as his teeth closed on a large slice, "and the gentleman whom Mr. Johnson was with," continues Charley, with his mouth quite full, "was Mr. Richardson who wrote——"

"Clarissa!" cry all the women in a breath, and run to the window to see their favourite writer. By this time the sun was sunk, the stars were twinkling overhead, and the footman came and lighted the candles in the Baroness's room opposite our spies.

Theo and her mother were standing together looking from their place of observation. There was a small illumination at Mrs. Brown's tart and tea-shop, by which our friends could see one lady getting Mr. Richardson's hat and stick, and another tying a shawl round his neck, after which he walked home.

"Oh dear me! he does not look like Grandison!" cries Theo.

"I rather think I wish we had not seen him, my dear," says mamma, who has been described as a most sentimental woman and eager novel-reader; and here again they were interrupted by Miss Hetty, who cried:

"Never mind that little fat man, but look yonder, mamma."

And they looked yonder. And they saw, in the first place, Mr. Warrington undergoing the honour of a presentation to the Countess of Yarmouth, who was still followed by the obsequious peer and prelate with the blue ribands. And now the Countess graciously sat down to a card-table, the Bishop and the Earl and a fourth person being her partners. And now Mr. Warrington came into the embrasure of the window with a lady whom they recognized as the lady whom they had seen for a few minutes at Oakhurst.

"How much finer he is," remarks mamma.

"How he is improved in his looks. What has he done to himself?" asks Theo.

"Look at his grand lace frills and ruffles! My dear, he has not got on our shirts any more," cries the matron.

"What are you talking about, girls?" asks papa, reclining on his sofa, where, perhaps, he was dozing after the fashion of honest house-fathers.

The girls said how Harry Warrington was in the window, talking with his cousin Lady Maria Esmond.

"Come away!" cries papa. "You have no right to be spying the young fellow. Down with the curtains, I say!"

And down the curtains went, so that the girls saw no more of Madame Bernstein's guests or doings for that night.

I pray you not be angry at my remarking, if only by way of contrast between these two opposite houses, that while Madame Bernstein and her guests—bishop, dignitaries, noblemen, and what not—were gambling or talking scandal, or devouring champagne and chickens (which I hold to be venial sin), or doing honour to her ladyship the king's favourite, the Countess of Yarmouth-Walmoden, our country friends in their lodgings knelt round their table, whither Mr. Brian the coachman came as silently as his creaking shoes would let him, whilst Mr. Lambert, standing up, read in a low voice, a prayer that heaven would lighten their darkness and defend them from the perils of that night, and a supplication that it would grant the request of those two or three gathered together.

Our young folks were up betimes on Sunday morning, and arrayed themselves in those smart new dresses which were to fascinate the Tunbridge folks, and, with the escort of brother Charley, paced the little town, and the quaint Pantiles, and the pretty common, long ere the company was at breakfast, or the bells had rung to church. It was Hester who found out where Harry Warrington's lodging must be, by remarking Mr. Gumbo in an undress, with his lovely hair in curl-papers, drawing a pair of red curtains aside, and opening a window-sash, whence he thrust his head and inhaled the sweet morning breeze. Mr. Gumbo did not happen to see the young people from Oakhurst, though they beheld him clearly enough. He leaned gracefully from the window; he waved a large feather-brush with which he condescended to dust the furniture of the apartment within; he affably engaged in conversation with a cherry-cheeked milk-maid, who was lingering under the casement, and kissed his lily hand to her. Gumbo's hand sparkled with rings, and his person was decorated with a profusion of jewellery—gifts, no doubt, of the fair who appreciated the young African. Once or twice more before breakfast-time the girls passed near that window. It remained open, but the room behind it was blank. No face of Harry Warrington appeared there. Neither spoke to the other of the subject on which both were brooding. Hetty was a little provoked with Charley, who was clamorous about breakfast, and told him he was always thinking of eating. In reply to her sarcastic inquiry, he artlessly owned he should like another cheese-cake, and good-natured Theo, laughing, said she had a sixpence, and if the cake-shop were open of a Sunday morning Charley should have one. The cake-shop was open: and Theo took out her little purse, netted by her dearest friend at school, and containing her pocket-piece, her grandmother's guinea, her slender little store of shillings—nay, some copper money at one end; and she treated Charley to the meal which he loved.

A great deal of fine company was at church. There was that funny old Duchess, and old Madame Bernstein, with Lady Maria at her side; and Mr. Wolfe, of course, by the side of Miss Lowther, and singing with her out of the same psalm-book; and Mr. Richardson with a bevy of ladies. One of them is Miss Fielding, papa tells them after church, Harry Fielding's sister. "Oh, girls, what good company he was! And his books are worth a dozen of your milk-sop 'Pamelas' and 'Clarissas,' Mrs. Lambert: but what woman ever loved true humour?" And there was Mr. Johnson sitting amongst the charity children. Did you see how he turned round to the altar at the Belief, and upset two or three of the scared little urchins in leather-breeches? And what a famous sermon Harry's parson gave, didn't he? A sermon about scandal. How he touched up some of the old harridans who were seated round! Why wasn't Mr. Warrington at church? It was a shame he wasn't at church.

"I really did not remark whether he was there or not," says Miss Hetty, tossing her head up.

But Theo, who was all truth, said, "Yes, I thought of him, and was sorry he was not there; and so did you think of him, Hetty."

"I did no such thing, Miss," persists Hetty.

"Then why did you whisper to me it was Harry's clergyman who preached?"

"To think of Mr. Warrington's clergyman is not to think of Mr. Warrington. It was a most excellent sermon, certainly, and the children sang most dreadfully out of tune. And there is Lady Maria at the window opposite, smelling at the roses; and that is Mr. Wolfe's step, I know his great military tramp. Right left—right left! How do you do, Colonel Wolfe?"

"Why do you look so glum, James?" asks Colonel Lambert, good-naturedly. "Has the charmer been scolding thee, or is thy conscience pricked by the sermon. Mr. Sampson, isn't the parson's name? A famous preacher, on my word!"

"A pretty preacher, and a pretty practitioner!" says Mr. Wolfe, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"Why, I thought the discourse did not last ten minutes, and madam did not sleep one single wink during the sermon, didst thou, Molly?"

"Did you see when the fellow came into church?" asked the indignant Colonel Wolfe. "He came in at the open door of the common, just in time, and as the psalm was over."

"Well, he had been reading the service probably to some sick person; there are many here," remarks Mrs. Lambert.

"Reading the service! Oh, my good Mrs. Lambert! Do you know where I found him? I went to look for your young scapegrace of a Virginian."

"His own name is a very pretty name, I'm sure," cries out Hetty. "It isn't Scapegrace! It is Henry Esmond Warrington, Esquire."

"Miss Hester, I found the parson in his cassock, and Henry Esmond Warrington, Esquire, in his bed-gown, at a quarter before eleven o'clock in the morning, when all the Sunday bells were ringing, and they were playing over a game of picquet they had had the night before!"

"Well, numbers of good people play at cards of a Sunday. The King plays at cards of a Sunday."

"Hush, my dear!"

"I know he does," says Hetty, "with that painted person we saw yesterday, that Countess what d'you call her?"

"I think, my dear Miss Hester, a clergyman had best take to God's books instead of the Devil's books on that day—and so I took the liberty of telling your parson." Hetty looked as if she thought it *was* a liberty which Mr. Wolfe had taken. "And I told our young friend that I thought he had better have been on his way to church than there in his bed-gown."

"You wouldn't have Harry go to church in a dressing-gown and nightcap, Colonel Wolfe? That *would* be a pretty sight, indeed!" again says Hetty fiercely.

"I would have my little girl's tongue not wag quite so fast," remarks papa, patting the girl's flushed little cheek.

"Not speak when a friend is attacked, and nobody says a word in his favour? No; nobody!"

Here the two lips of the little mouth closed on each other; the whole little frame shook: the child flung a parting look of defiance at Mr. Wolfe, and went out of the room, just in time to close the door, and burst out crying on the stair.

Mr. Wolfe looked very much discomforted. "I am sure, Aunt Lambert, I did not intend to hurt Hester's feelings."

"No, James," she said, very kindly—the young officer used to call her Aunt Lambert in quite early days—and she gave him her hand.

Mr. Lambert whistled his favourite tune of "Over the hills and far away," with a drum accompaniment performed by his fingers on the window. "I say, you mustn't whistle on Sunday, papa!" cried the artless young gown-boy from Grey Friars; and then suggested that it was three hours from breakfast, and he should like to finish Theo's cheese-cake.

"Oh, you greedy child!" cries Theo. But here, hearing a little exclamatory noise outside, she ran out of the room, closing the door behind her. And we will not pursue her. The noise was that sob which broke from Hester's panting, overloaded heart; and, though we cannot see, I am sure the little maid flung herself on her sister's neck, and wept upon Theo's kind bosom.

Hetty did not walk out in the afternoon when the family took the air on the common, but had a headache and lay on her bed, where her mother watched her. Charley had discovered a comrade from Grey Friars: Mr. Wolfe of course paired off with Miss Lowther: and Theo and her father, taking their sober walk in the Sabbath sunshine, found Madame Bernstein basking on a bench under a tree, her niece and nephew in attendance. Harry ran up to greet his dear friends: he was radiant with pleasure at beholding them—the elder ladies were most gracious to the Colonel and his wife, who had so kindly welcomed their Harry.

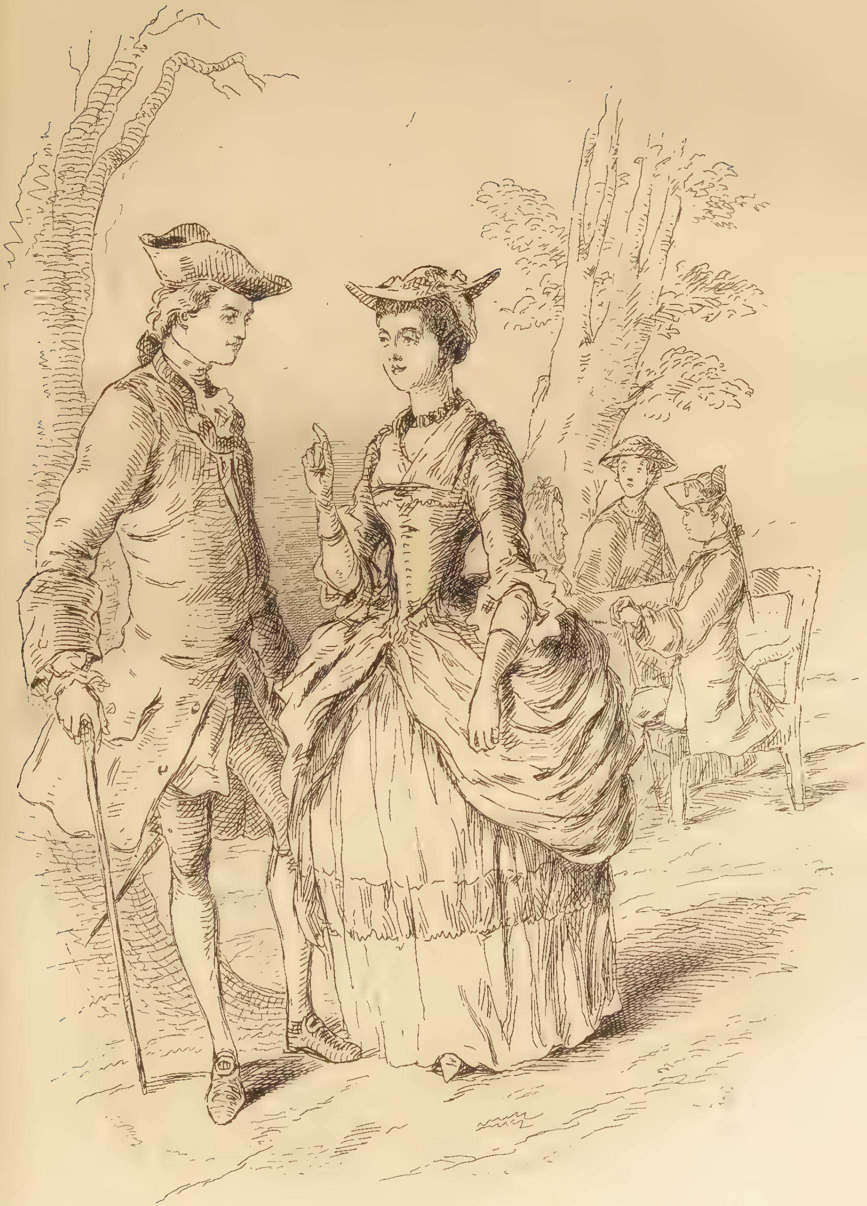
How noble and handsome he looked, Theo thought: she called him by his Christian name, as if he were really her brother. "Why did we not see you sooner to-day, Harry?" she asked.

"I never thought you were here, Theo."

"But you might have seen us if you wished."

"Where?" asked Harry.

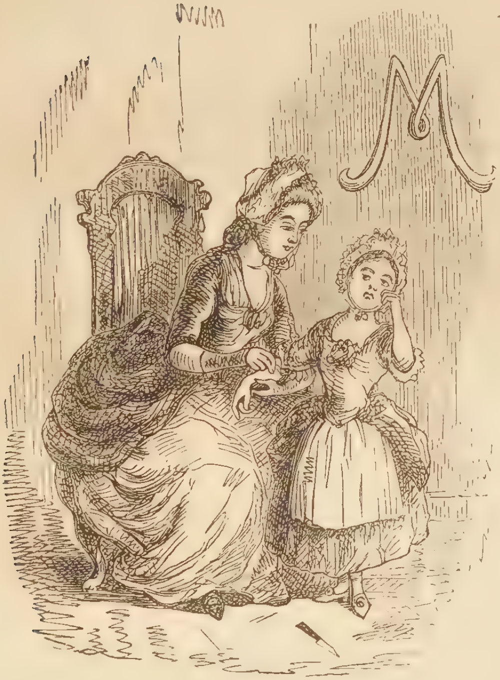
"*There*, sir," she said, pointing to the church. And she held her hand up as if in reproof; but a sweet kindness beamed in her face. Ah, friendly young reader, wandering on the world and struggling with temptation, may you also have one or two pure hearts to love and pray for you!



A LAY SERMON

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CONTAINS A SOLILOQUY BY HESTER.



MARTIN LAMBERT'S first feeling, upon learning the little secret which his younger daughter's emotion had revealed, was to be angry with the lad who had robbed his child's heart away from him and her family. "A plague upon all scapegraces, English or Indian!" cried the Colonel to his wife. "I wish this one had broke his nose against any door-post but ours."

"Perhaps we are to cure him of being a scapegrace, my dear," says Mrs. Lambert, mildly interposing, "and the fall at our door hath something providential in it. You laughed at me, Mr. Lambert, when I said so before; but if heaven did not send the young gentleman to us, who did? And it may be for the blessing and happiness of us all that he came, too."

"It's hard, Molly!" groaned the Colonel. "We cherish and fondle and rear 'em: we tend them through sickness and health: we toil and we scheme: we hoard away money in the stocking, and patch our own old coats: if they've a headache, we can't sleep for thinking of their ailment; if they have a wish or fancy, we work day and night to compass it, and 'tis darling daddy and dearest pappy, and whose father is like ours? and so forth. On Tuesday morning I am king of my house and family. On Tuesday evening Prince Whippersnapper makes his appearance, and my reign is over. A whole life is forgotten and forsworn for a pair of blue eyes, a pair of lean shanks, and a head of yellow hair."

"'Tis written that we women should leave all to follow our husband. I think *our* courtship was not very long, dear Martin!" said the matron, laying her hand on her husband's arm.

"'Tis human nature, and what can you expect of the jade?" sighed the Colonel.

"And I think I did my duty to my husband, though I own I left *my* papa for him," added Mrs. Lambert, softly.

"Excellent wench! Perdition catch my soul! but I do love thee, Molly!" says the good Colonel; "but, then, mind you, your father never did me; and if ever I am to have sons-in-law——"

"Ever, indeed! Of course, my girls are to have husbands, Mr. Lambert!" cries mamma.

"Well, when they come, I'll hate them, Madam, as your father did me; and quite right too, for taking his treasure away from him."

"Don't be irreligious and unnatural, Martin Lambert! I say you *are* unnatural, sir!" continues the matron.

"Nay, my dear, I have an old tooth in my left jaw, here; and 'tis natural that the tooth should come out. But when the tooth-drawer pulls it, 'tis natural that I should feel pain. Do you suppose, Madam, that I don't love Hetty better than any tooth in my head?" asks Mr. Lambert. But no woman was ever averse to the idea of her daughter getting a husband, however fathers revolt against the invasion of the son-in-law. As for mothers and grandmothers, those good folks are married over again in the marriage of their young ones; and their souls attire themselves in the laces and muslins of twenty—forty years ago; the postilion's white ribbons bloom again, and they flutter into the post-chaise, and drive away. What woman, however old, has not the bridal-favours and raiment stowed away, and packed in lavender, in the inmost cupboards of her heart?

"It will be a sad thing parting with her," continued Mrs. Lambert, with a sigh.

"You have settled that point already, Molly," laughs the Colonel.

"Had I not best go out and order raisins and corinths for the wedding-cake?"

"And then I shall have to leave the house in their charge when I go to her, you know, in Virginia. How many miles is it to Virginia, Martin? I should think it must be thousands of miles."

"A hundred and seventy-three thousand three hundred and ninety-one and three-quarters, my dear, by the *near* way," answers Lambert, gravely; "that through Prester John's country. By the other route, through Persia——"

"Oh, give me the one where there is the least of the sea, and your horrid ships, which I can't bear!" cries the Colonel's spouse. "I hope Rachel Esmond and I shall be better friends. She had a very high spirit when we were girls at school."

"Had we not best go about the baby-linen, Mrs. Martin Lambert?" here interposed her wondering husband. Now, Mrs. Lambert, I dare say, thought there was no matter for wonderment at all, and had remarked some very pretty lace caps and bibs in Mrs. Bobbinit's toy-shop. And on that Sunday afternoon, when the discovery was made, and while little Hetty was lying upon her pillow with feverish cheeks, closed eyes, and a piteous face, her mother looked at the child with the most perfect ease of mind, and seemed to be rather pleased than otherwise at Hetty's woe.

The girl was not only unhappy, but enraged with herself for having published her secret. Perhaps she had not known it until the sudden emotion acquainted her with her own state of mind; and now the little maid chose to be as much ashamed as if she had done a wrong, and been discovered in it. She was indignant with her own weakness, and broke into transports of wrath against herself. She vowed she never would forgive herself for submitting to such a humiliation. So the young pard, wounded by the hunter's dart, chafes with rage in the forest, is angry with the surprise of the rankling steel in her side, and snarls and bites at her sister-cubs, and the leopardess, her spotted mother.

Little Hetty tore and gnawed, and growled, so that I should not like to have been her fraternal cub, or her spotted dam or sire. "What business has any young woman," she cried out, "to indulge in any such nonsense? Mamma, I ought to be whipped, and sent to bed. I know perfectly well that Mr. Warrington does not care a fig about me. I dare say he likes French actresses and the commonest little milliner-girl in the toyshop better than me. And so he ought, and so they *are* better than me. Why, what a fool I am to burst out crying like a ninny about nothing, and because Mr. Wolfe said Harry played cards of a Sunday! I know he is not clever, like papa. I believe he is stupid—I am certain he is stupid: but he is not so stupid as I am. Why, of course, I can't marry him. How am I to go to America, and leave you and Theo? Of course, he likes somebody else, at America, or at Tunbridge, or at Jericho, or somewhere. He is a prince in his own country, and can't think of marrying a poor half-pay officer's daughter, with twopence to her fortune. Used not you to tell me how, when I was a baby, I cried and wanted the moon? I am a baby now, a most absurd, silly, little baby—don't talk to me, Mrs. Lambert, I *am*. Only there is this to be said, he don't know anything about it, and I would rather cut my tongue out than tell him."

Dire were the threats with which Hetty menaced Theo, in case her sister should betray her. As for the infantile Charley, his mind being altogether set on cheese-cakes, he had not remarked or been moved by Miss Hester's emotion; and the parents and the kind sister of course all promised not to reveal the little maid's secret.

"I begin to think it had been best for us to stay at home," sighed Mrs. Lambert to her husband.

"Nay, my dear," replied the other. "Human nature will be human nature; surely Hetty's mother told me herself that she had the beginning of a liking for a certain young curate before she fell over head and heels in love with a certain young officer of Kingsley's. And as for me, my heart was wounded in a dozen places ere Miss Molly Benson took entire possession of it. Our sons and daughters must follow in the way of their parents before them, I suppose. Why, but yesterday, you were scolding me for grumbling at Miss Het's precocious fancies. To do the child justice she disguises her feelings entirely, and I defy Mr. Warrington to know from her behaviour how she is disposed towards him."

"A daughter of mine and yours, Martin," cries the mother with great dignity, "is not going to fling herself at a gentleman's head!"

"Neither herself nor the teacup, my dear," answers the Colonel. "Little Miss Het treats Mr. Warrington like a vixen. He never comes to us, but she boxes his ears in one fashion or t'other. I protest she is barely civil to him; but, knowing what is going on in the young hypocrite's mind, I am not going to be angry at her rudeness."

"She hath no need to be rude at all, Martin; and our girl is good enough for any gentleman in England or America. Why, if their ages suit, shouldn't they marry after all, sir?"

"Why, if he wants her, shouldn't he ask her, my dear? I am sorry we came. I am for putting the horses into the carriage, and turning their heads towards home again."

But mamma fondly said, "Depend on it, my dear, that these matters are wisely ordained for us. Depend upon it, Martin, it was not for nothing that Harry Warrington was brought to our gate in that way; and that he and our children are thus brought together again. If that marriage has been decreed in heaven, a marriage it will be."

"At what age, Molly, I wonder, do women begin and leave off match-making? If our little chit falls in love and falls out again, she will not be the first of her sex, Mrs. Lambert. I wish we were on our way home again, and, if I had my will, would trot off this very night."

"He has promised to drink his tea here to-night. You would not take away our child's pleasure, Martin?" asked the mother, softly.

In his fashion, the father was not less good-natured. "You know, my dear," says Lambert, "that if either of 'em had a fancy to our ears, we would cut them off and serve them in a fricassée."

Mary Lambert laughed at the idea of her pretty little delicate ears being so served. When her husband was most tender-hearted, his habit was to be most grotesque. When he pulled the pretty little delicate ear, behind which the matron's fine hair was combed back, wherein twinkled a shining line or two of silver, I dare say he did not hurt her much. I dare say she was thinking of the soft, well-remembered times of her own modest youth and sweet courtship. Hallowed remembrances of sacred times! If the sight of youthful love is pleasant to behold, how much more charming the aspect of the affection that has survived years, sorrows, faded beauty perhaps, and life's doubts, differences, trouble!

In regard of her promise to disguise her feelings for Mr. Warrington in that gentleman's presence, Miss Hester was better, or worse, if you will, than her word. Harry not only came to take tea with his friends, but invited them for the next day to an entertainment at the Rooms, to be given in their special honour.

"A dance, and given for us!" cries Theo. "Oh, Harry, how delightful; I wish we could begin this very minute!"

"Why, for a savage Virginian, I declare, Harry Warrington, thou art the most civilized young man possible!" says the Colonel. "My dear, shall we dance a minuet together?"

"We have done such a thing before, Martin Lambert!" says the soldier's fond wife. Her husband hums a minuet tune; whips a plate from the tea-table, and makes a preparatory bow and flourish with it as if it were a hat, whilst madam performs her best curtsey.

Only Hetty, of the party, persists in looking glum and displeased. "Why, child, have you not a word of thanks to throw to Mr. Warrington?" asks Theo of her sister.

"I never did care for dancing much," says Hetty. "What is the use of standing up opposite a stupid man, and dancing down a room with him?"

"*Merci du compliment!*" says Mr. Warrington.

"I don't say that you are stupid—that is—that is, I—I only meant country dances," says Hetty, biting her lips, as she caught her sister's eye. She remembered she *had* said Harry was stupid, and Theo's droll humourous glance was her only reminder.

But with this Miss Hetty chose to be as angry as if it had been quite a cruel rebuke. "I hate dancing—there—I own it," she says, with a toss of her head.

"Nay, you used to like it well enough, child!" interposes her mother.

"That was when she was a child: don't you see she is grown up to be an old woman?" remarks Hetty's father. "Or perhaps Miss Hester has got the gout?"

"Fiddle!" says Hester, snappishly, drubbing with her little feet.

"What's a dance without a fiddle?" says imperturbed papa.

Darkness has come over Harry Warrington's face. "I come to try my best, and give them pleasure and a dance," he thinks, "and the little thing tells me she hates dancing. We don't practise kindness, or acknowledge hospitality so in our country. No—nor speak to our parents so, neither." I am afraid, in this particular, usages have changed in the United States during the last hundred years, and that the young folks there are considerably *Hettified.*

Not content with this, Miss Hester must proceed to make such fun of all the company at the Wells, and especially of Harry's own immediate pursuits and companions, that the honest lad was still farther pained at her behaviour; and, when he saw Mrs. Lambert alone, asked how or in what he had again offended, that Hester was so angry with him? The kind matron felt more than ever well disposed towards the boy, after her daughter's conduct to him. She would have liked to tell the secret which Hester hid so fiercely. Theo, too, remonstrated with her sister in private; but Hester would not listen to the subject, and was as angry in her bedroom, when the girls were alone, as she had been in the parlour before her mother's company. "Suppose he hates me?" says she. "I expect he will. I hate myself, I do, and scorn myself for being such an idiot. How ought he to do otherwise than hate me? Didn't I abuse him, call him goose, all sorts of names? And I know he is not clever all the time. I know I have better wits than he has. It is only because he is tall, and has blue eyes, and a pretty nose that I like him. What an absurd fool a girl must be to like a man merely because he has a blue nose and hooked eyes! So I *am* a fool, and I won't have you say a word to the contrary, Theo!"

Now Theo thought that her little sister, far from being a fool, was a wonder of wonders, and that if any girl was worthy of any prince in Christendom, Hetty was that spinster. "You *are* silly sometimes, Hetty," says Theo, "that is when you speak unkindly to people who mean you well, as you did to Mr. Warrington at tea to-night. When he proposed to us his party at the 'Assembly Rooms,' and nothing could be more gallant of him, why did you say you didn't care for music, or dancing, or tea? You know you love them all!"

"I said it merely to vex myself, Theo, and annoy myself, and whip myself, as I deserve, child. And, besides, how can you expect such an idiot as I am to say anything but idiotic things? Do you know it quite pleased me to see him angry. I thought, Ah! now I have hurt his feelings! Now he will say, Hetty Lambert is an odious little set-up, sour-tempered vixen. And that will teach him, and you, and mamma, and papa, at any rate, that I am not going to set my cap at Mr. Harry. No; our papa is ten times as good as he is. I will stay by our papa, and if he asked me to go to Virginia with him to-morrow I wouldn't, Theo. My sister is worth all the Virginians that ever were made since the world began."

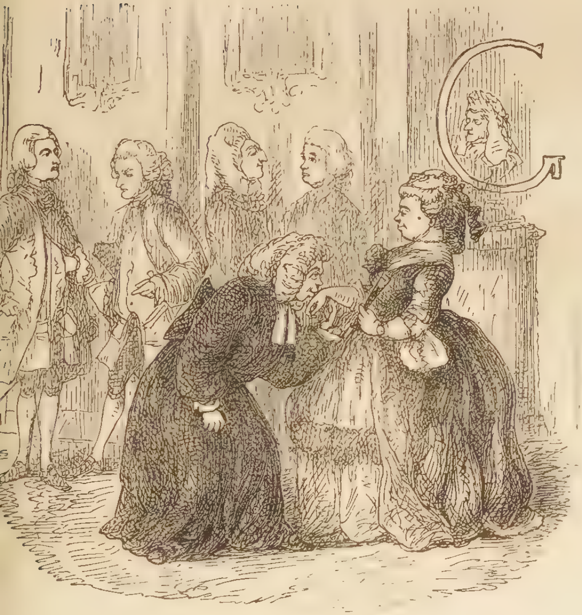
And here, I suppose, follow osculations between the sisters, and mother's knock comes to the door, who has overheard their talk through the wainscot, and calls out, "Children, 'tis time to go to sleep." Theo's eyes close speedily, and she is at rest; but oh, poor little Hetty! Think of the hours tolling one after another, and the child's eyes wide open, as she lies tossing and wakeful with the anguish of the new wound!

"It is a judgment upon me," she says, "for having thought and spoke scornfully of him. Only, why should there be a judgment upon me? I was only in fun. I knew I liked him very much all the time: but I thought Theo liked him too, and I would give up anything for my darling Theo. If she had, no tortures should ever have drawn a word from me—I would have got a rope-ladder to help her to run away with Harry, that I would, or fetched the clergyman to marry them. And then I would have retired alone, and alone, and alone, and taken care of papa and mamma, and of the poor in the village, and have read sermons, though I hate 'em, and have died without telling a word—not a word—and I shall die soon, I know I shall." But when the dawn rises, the little maid is asleep, nestling by her sister, the stain of a tear or two upon her flushed downy cheek.

Most of us play with edged tools at some period of our lives, and cut ourselves accordingly. At first the cut hurts and stings, and down drops the knife, and we cry out like wounded little babies as we are. Some very very few and unlucky folks at the game cut their heads sheer off, or stab themselves mortally, and perish outright, and there is an end of them. But,—heaven help us!—many people have fingered those *ardentes sagittas* which Love sharpens on his whetstone, and are stabbed, scarred, pricked, perforated, tattooed all over with the wounds, who recover, and live to be quite lively. *Wir auch* have tasted *das irdische Glück;* we also have *gelebt und —und so weiter.* Warble your death song, sweet Thekla! Perish off the face of the earth, poor pulmonary victim, if so minded! Had you survived to a later period of life, my dear, you would have thought of a sentimental disappointment without any reference to the undertaker. Let us trust there is no present need of a sexton for Miss Hetty. But meanwhile, the very instant she wakes, there, tearing at her little heart, will that Care be, which has given her a few hours' respite, melted, no doubt, by her youth and her tears.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

IN WHICH MR. WARRINGTON TREATS THE COMPANY WITH TEA AND A BALL.



GENEROUS with his very easily gotten money, hospitable and cordial to all, our young Virginian, in his capacity of man of fashion, could not do less than treat his country friends to an entertainment at the Assembly Rooms, whither, according to the custom of the day, he invited almost all the remaining company at the Wells. Card-tables were set in one apartment, for all those who could not spend an evening without the pastime then common to all European society: a supper with champagne in some profusion and bowls of negus was prepared in another chamber: the large assembly room was set apart for the dance, of which enjoyment Harry Warrington's guests partook in our ancestors' homely fashion. I cannot fancy that the amusement was especially lively. First, minuets were called; two or three of which were performed by as many couple. The spinsters of the highest rank in the assembly went out for the minuet, and my Lady Maria Esmond being an earl's daughter, and the person of the highest rank present (with the exception of Lady Augusta Crutchley, who was lame), Mr. Warrington danced the first minuet with his cousin, acquitting himself to the satisfaction of the whole room, and performing much more elegantly than Mr. Wolfe, who stood up with Miss Lowther. Having completed the dance with Lady Maria, Mr. Warrington begged Miss Hetty to do him the honour of walking the next minuet, and accordingly Miss Hetty, blushing and looking very happy, went through her exercise to the great delight of her parents and the rage of Miss Humpleby, Sir John Humpleby's daughter, of Liphook, who expected, at least, to have stood up next after my Lady Maria. Then, after the minuets, came country dances, the music being performed by a harp, fiddle, and flageolet; perched in a little balcony, and thrumming through the evening rather feeble and melancholy tunes. Take up an old book of music, and play a few of those tunes now, and one wonders how people at any time could have found the airs otherwise than melancholy. And yet they loved and frisked and laughed and courted to that sad accompaniment. There is scarce one of the airs that has not an *amari aliquid*, a tang of sadness. Perhaps it is because they are old and defunct, and their plaintive echoes call out to us from the limbo of the past, whither they have been consigned for this century. Perhaps they *were* gay when they were alive; and our descendants when they hear—well, never mind names—when they hear the works of certain maestri now popular, will say: Bon Dieu, is this the music which amused our forefathers?

Mr. Warrington had the honour of a duchess's company at his tea-drinking—Colonel Lambert's and Mr. Prior's heroine, the Duchess of Queensberry. And though the duchess carefully turned her back upon a countess who was present, laughed loudly, glanced at the latter over her shoulder, and pointed at her with her fan, yet almost all the company pushed, and bowed, and cringed, and smiled, and backed before this countess, scarcely taking any notice of her Grace of Queensberry and her jokes, and her fan, and her airs. Now this countess was no other than the Countess of Yarmouth-Walmoden, the lady whom his Majesty George the Second, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, delighted to honour. She had met Harry Warrington in the walks that morning, and had been mighty gracious to the young Virginian. She had told him they would have a game at cards that night; and purblind old Colonel Blinkinsop, who fancied the invitation had been addressed to him, had made the profoundest of bows. "Pooh! pooh!" said the Countess of England and Hanover, "I don't mean you. I mean the young Firshinian!" And everybody congratulated the youth on his good fortune. At night, all the world, in order to show their loyalty doubtless, thronged round my Lady Yarmouth; my Lord Bamborough was eager to make her *partie* at quadrille; my Lady Blanche Pendragon, that model of virtue; Sir Lancelot Quintain, that pattern of knighthood and valour; Mr. Dean of Ealing, that exemplary divine and preacher; numerous gentlemen, noblemen, generals, colonels, matrons, and spinsters of the highest rank, were on the watch for a smile from her, or eager to jump up and join her card-table. Lady Maria waited upon her with meek respect, and Madame de Bernstein treated the Hanoverian lady with profound gravity and courtesy,

Harry's bow had been no lower than hospitality required; but such as it was, Miss Hester chose to be indignant with it. She scarce spoke a word to her partner during their dance together; and when he took her to the supper-room for refreshment she was little more communicative. To enter that room they had to pass by Madame Walmoden's card-table, who goodnaturedly called out to her host as he was passing, and asked him if his "breddy liddle bardner liked tanzing?"

"I thank your ladyship, I don't like tanzing, and I don't like cards," says Miss Hester, tossing up her head; and, dropping a curtsey like a "cheese," she strutted away from the countess's table.

Mr. Warrington was very much offended. Sarcasm from the young to the old pained him: flippant behaviour towards himself hurt him. Courteous in his simple way to all persons whom he met, he expected a like politeness from them. Hetty perfectly well knew what offence she was giving; could mark the displeasure reddening on her partner's honest face, with a side-long glance of her eye; nevertheless she tried to wear her most ingenuous smile; and, as she came up to the side-board where the refreshments were set, artlessly said:—

"What a horrid, vulgar old woman that is; don't you think so?"

"*What* woman?" asked the young man.

"That German woman—my Lady Yarmouth—to whom all the men are bowing and cringing."

"Her ladyship has been very kind to me," says Harry, grimly. "Won't you have some of this custard?"

"And you have been bowing to her, too! You look as if your negus was not nice," harmlessly continues Miss Hetty.

"It is not very good negus," says Harry, with a gulp.

"And the custard is bad too! I declare 'tis made with bad eggs!" cries Miss Lambert.

"I wish, Hester, that the entertainment and the company had been better to your liking," says poor Harry.

"'Tis very unfortunate; but I dare say you could not help it," cries the young woman, tossing her little curly head.

Mr. Warrington groaned in spirit, perhaps in body, and clenched his fists and his teeth. The little torturer artlessly continued, "You seem disturbed: shall we go to my mamma?"

"Yes, let us go to your mamma," cries Mr. Warrington, with glaring eyes and a "Curse you, why are you always standing in the way?" to an unlucky waiter.

"La! Is that the way you speak in Virginia?" asks Miss Pertness.

"We are rough there sometimes, madam, and can't help being disturbed," he says slowly, and with a quiver in his whole frame, looking down upon her with fire flashing out of his eyes. Hetty saw nothing distinctly afterwards, and until she came to her mother. Never had she seen Harry look so handsome or so noble.

"You look pale, child!" cries mamma, anxious, like all *pavidæ matres*.

"'Tis the cold—no, I mean the heat. Thank you, Mr. Warrington." And she makes him a faint curtsey, as Harry bows a tremendous bow, and walks elsewhere amongst his guests. He hardly knows what is happening at first, so angry is he.

He is aroused by another altercation between his aunt and the Duchess of Queensberry. When the royal favourite passed the Duchess, her grace gave her ladyship an awful stare out of eyes that were not so bright now as they had been in the young days when they "set the world on fire;" turned round with an affected laugh to her neighbour, and shot at the jolly Hanoverian lady a ceaseless fire of giggles and sneers. The Countess pursued her game at cards, not knowing, or not choosing, perhaps, to know how her enemy was jibing at her. There had been a feud of many years' date between their Graces of Queensberry and the family on the throne.

"How you all bow down to the idol! Don't tell me! You are as bad as the rest, my good Madame Bernstein!" the Duchess says. "Ah, what a true Christian country this is! and how your dear first husband, the Bishop, would have liked to see such a sight!"

"Forgive me, if I fail quite to understand your Grace."

"We are both of us growing old, my good Bernstein, or, perhaps, we won't understand when we don't choose to understand. That is the way with us women, my good young Iroquois."

"Your Grace remarked, that it was a Christian country," said Madame de Bernstein, "and I failed to perceive the point of the remark."

"Indeed, my good creature, there is very little point in it! I meant we were such good Christians, because we were so forgiving. Don't you remember reading, when you were young, or your husband the Bishop reading, when he was in the pulpit, how, when a woman amongst the Jews was caught doing wrong, the Pharisees were for stoning her out of hand? Far from stoning such a woman now, look, how fond we are of her! Any man in this room would go round it on his knees if yonder woman bade him. Yes, Madam Walmoden, you may look up from your cards with your great painted face, and frown with your great painted eyebrows at me. You know I am talking about you; and I intend to go on talking about you, too. I say any man here would go round the room on his knees, if you bade him!"

"I think, Madam, I know two or three who wouldn't!" says Mr. Warrington, with some spirit.

"Quick, let me hug them to my heart of hearts!" cries the old Duchess. "Which are they? Bring 'em to me, my dear Iroquois! Let us have a game of four—of honest men and women; that is to say, if we can find a couple more partners, Mr. Warrington!"

"Here are we three," says the Baroness Bernstein, with a forced laugh; "let us play a dummy."

"Pray, Madam, where is the third?" asks the old Duchess, looking round.

"Madam!" cries out the other elderly lady, "I leave your Grace to boast of your honesty, which I have no doubt is spotless: but I will thank you not to doubt mine before my own relatives and children!"

"See how she fires up at a word! I am sure, my dear creature, you are quite as honest as most of the company," says the Duchess.

"Which may not be good enough for her Grace the Duchess of Queensberry and Dover, who, to be sure, might have stayed away in such a case, but it is the best my nephew could get, Madam, and his best he has given you. You look astonished, Harry, my dear—and well you may. He is not used to our ways, Madam."

"Madam, he has found an aunt who can teach him our ways, and a great deal more!" cries the Duchess, rapping her fan.

"She will teach him to try and make all his guests welcome, old or young, rich or poor. That is the Virginian way, isn't it, Harry? She will tell him, when Catherine Hyde is angry with his old aunt, that they were friends as girls, and ought not to quarrel now they are old women. And she will not be wrong, will she, Duchess?" And herewith the one dowager made a superb curtsey to the other, and the battle just impending between them passed away.

"Egad, it was like Byng and Galissonière!" cried Chaplain Sampson, as Harry talked over the night's transactions with his tutor next morning. "No power on earth, I thought, could have prevented those two from going into action!"

"Seventy-fours at least—both of 'em!" laughs Harry.

"But the Baroness declined the battle, and sailed out of fire with inimitable skill."

"Why should she be afraid? I have heard you say my aunt is as witty as any woman alive, and need fear the tongue of no dowager in England."

"Hem! Perhaps she had good reasons for being peaceable!" Sampson knew very well what they were, and that poor Bernstein's reputation was so hopelessly flawed and cracked, that any sarcasms levelled at Madame Walmoden were equally applicable to her.

"Sir," cried Harry, in great amazement, "you don't mean to say there is anything against the character of my aunt, the Baroness de Bernstein!"

The Chaplain looked at the young Virginian with such an air of utter wonderment, that the latter saw there must be some history against his aunt, and some charge which Sampson did not choose to reveal. "Great heavens!" Harry groaned out, "are there two then in the family, who are——"

"Which two?" asked the Chaplain.

But here Harry stopped, blushing very red. He remembered, and we shall presently have to state, whence he had got his information regarding the other family culprit, and bit his lip, and was silent.

"Bygones are always unpleasant things, Mr. Warrington," said the Chaplain; "and we had best hold our peace regarding them. No man or woman can live long in this wicked world of ours without some scandal attaching to them, and I fear our excellent Baroness has been no more fortunate than her neighbours. We cannot escape calumny, my dear young friend! You have had sad proof enough of that in your brief stay amongst us. But we can have clear consciences, and that is the main point!" And herewith the Chaplain threw his handsome eyes upward, and tried to look as if *his* conscience was as white as the ceiling.

"Has there been anything *very* wrong, then, about my Aunt Bernstein?" continued Harry, remembering how at home his mother had never spoken of the Baroness.

"*O sancta simplicitas!*" the Chaplain muttered to himself. "Stories, my dear sir, much older than your time or mine. Stories such as were told about everybody, *de me, de te;* you know with what degree of truth in your own case."

"Confound the villain! I should like to hear any scoundrel say a word against the dear old lady," cries the young gentleman. "Why, this world, parson, is full of lies and scandal!"

"And you are just beginning to find it out, my dear sir," cries the clergyman, with his most beatified air. "Whose character has not been attacked? My lord's, yours, mine,—everyone's. We must bear as well as we can, and pardon to the utmost of our power."

"You may. It's your cloth, you know; but, by George, *I* won't!" cries Mr. Warrington, and again goes down the fist with a thump on the table. "Let any fellow say a word in my hearing against that dear old creature, and I'll pull his nose, as sure as my name is Henry Esmond. How do you do, Colonel Lambert. You find us late again, sir. Me and his Reverence kept it up pretty late with some of the young fellows, after the ladies went away. I hope the dear ladies are well, sir?" and here Harry rose, greeting his friend the Colonel very kindly, who had come to pay him a morning visit, and had entered the room followed by Mr. Gumbo (the latter preferred walking very leisurely about all the affairs of life), just as Harry—suiting the action to the word—was tweaking the nose of Calumny.

"The ladies are purely. Whose nose were you pulling when I came in, Mr. Warrington?" says the Colonel, laughing.

"Isn't it a shame, sir? The parson, here, was telling me, that there are villains here who attack the character of my aunt, the Baroness of Bernstein!"

"You don't mean to say so!" cries Mr. Lambert.

"I tell Mr. Harry that everybody is calumniated!" says the Chaplain, with a clerical intonation; but, at the same time, he looks at Colonel Lambert and winks, as much as to say, "He knows nothing—keep him in the dark."

The Colonel took the hint. "Yes," says he, "the jaws of slander are for ever wagging. Witness that story about the dancing-girl, that we all believed against you, Harry Warrington."

"What all, sir?"

"No, not all. One didn't—Hetty didn't. You should have heard her standing up for you, Harry, t'other day, when somebody—a little bird—brought us *another* story about you; about a game of cards on Sunday morning, when you and a friend of yours might have been better employed." And here there was a look of mingled humour and reproof at the clergyman.

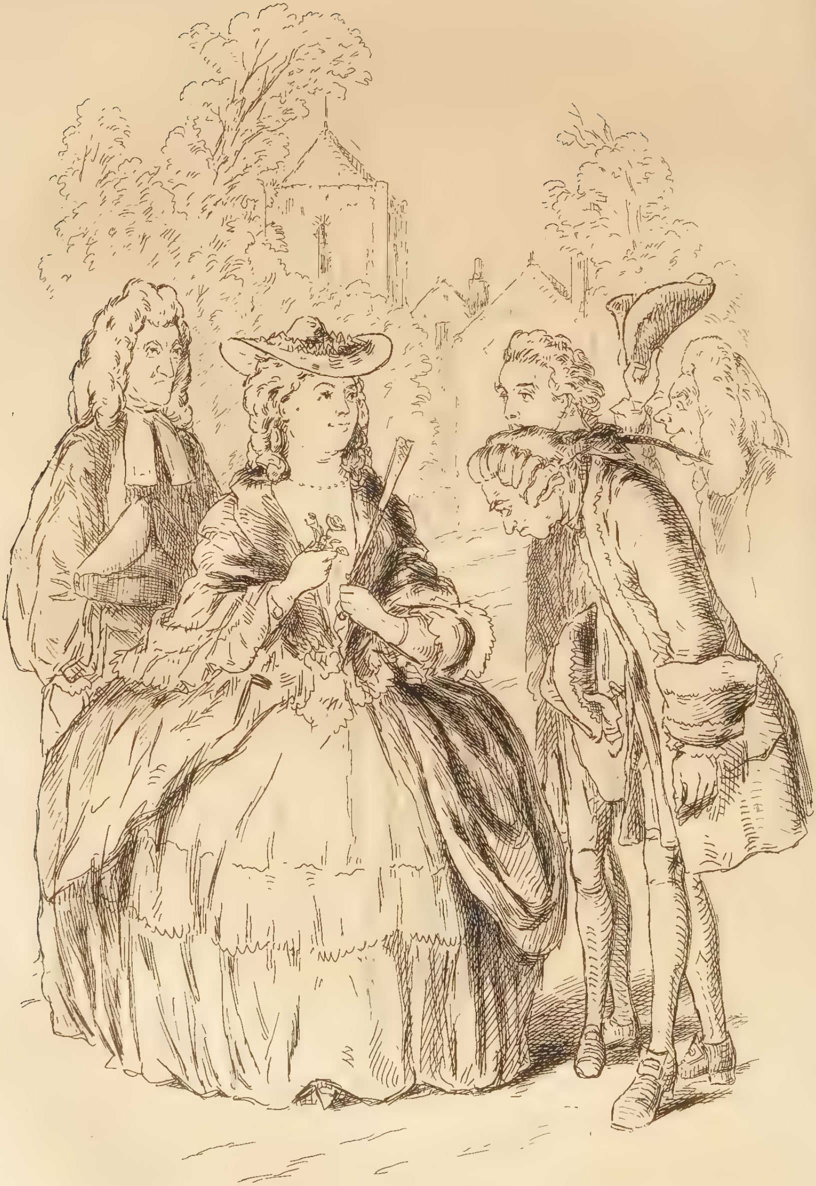
"Faith, I own it, sir!" says the Chaplain. "It was *mea culpa, mea maxima*—no, *mea minima culpa*, only the rehearsal of an old game at picquet, which we had been talking over."

"And did Miss Hester stand up for me?" says Harry.

"Miss Hester did. But why that wondering look?" asks the Colonel.

"She scolded me last night like—like anything," says downright Harry. "I never heard a young girl go on so. She made fun of everybody—hit about at young and old—so that I couldn't help telling her, sir, that in our country, leastways in Virginia (they say the Yankees are very pert), young people don't speak of their elders so. And, do you know, sir, we had a sort of a quarrel, and I'm very glad you've told me she spoke kindly of me?" says Harry, shaking his friend's hand, a ready boyish emotion glowing in his cheeks and in his eyes.

"You won't come to much hurt if you find no worse enemy than



A VICE-QUEEN.

Hester, Mr. Warrington," said the girl's father, gravely, looking not without a deep thrill of interest at the flushed face and moist eyes of his young friend. "Is he fond of her?" thought the Colonel. "And how fond? Tis evident he knows nothing, and Miss Het has been performing some of her tricks. He is a fine honest lad, and God bless him." And Colonel Lambert looked towards Harry with that manly, friendly kindness which our lucky young Virginian was not unaccustomed to inspire, for he was comely to look at, prone to blush, to kindle, nay, to melt, at a kind story. His laughter was cheery to hear: his eyes shone confidently: his voice spoke truth.

"And the young lady of the minuet? She distinguished herself to perfection: the whole room admired," asked the courtly Chaplain. "I trust Miss—Miss——"

"Miss Theodosia is perfectly well, and ready to dance at this minute with your Reverence," says her father. "Or stay, Chaplain, perhaps you only dance on Sunday?" The Colonel then turned to Harry again. "You paid your court very neatly to the great lady, Mr. Flatterer. My Lady Yarmouth has been trumpeting your praises at the Pump Room. She says she has got a leedel boy in Hanover dat is wery like you, and you are a sharming young mans."

"If her ladyship were a queen, people could scarcely be more respectful to her," says the Chaplain.

"Let us call her a vice-queen, parson," says the Colonel, with a twinkle of his eye.

"Her Majesty pocketed forty of my guineas at quadrille," cries Mr. Warrington, with a laugh.

"She will play you on the same terms another day. The Countess is fond of play, and she wins from most people," said the Colonel, drily. "Why don't you bet her ladyship five thousand on a bishopric, parson? I have heard of a clergyman who made such a bet, and who lost it, and who paid it, and who got the bishopric."

"Ah! who will lend me the five thousand? Will you, sir?" asked the Chaplain.

"No, sir. I won't give her five thousand to be made Commander-in-Chief or Pope of Rome," says the Colonel, stoutly. "I shall fling no stones at the woman; but I shall bow no knee to her, as I see a pack of rascals do. No offence—I don't mean you. And I don't mean Harry Warrington, who was quite right to be civil to her, and to lose his money with good humour. Harry, I am come to bid thee farewell, my boy. We have had our pleasuring—my money is run out, and we must jog back to Oakhurst. Will you ever come and see the old place again?"

"Now, sir, now! I'll ride back with you!" cries Harry, eagerly.

"Why—no—not now," says the Colonel, in a hurried manner. "We haven't got room—that is, we're—we're expecting some friends." ["The Lord forgive me for the lie!" he mutters.] "But—but you'll come to us when—when Tom's at home—yes, when Tom's at home. That will be famous fun—and I'd have you to know, sir, that my wife and I love you sincerely, sir—and so do the girls, however much they scold you. And if you ever are in a scrape—and such things have happened, Mr. Chaplain! you will please to count upon me. Mind that, sir!"

And the Colonel was for taking leave of Harry then and there, on the spot, but the young man followed him down the stairs, and insisted upon saying good-by to his dear ladies.

Instead, however, of proceeding immediately to Mr. Lambert's lodging, the two gentlemen took the direction of the common, where, looking from Harry's windows, Mr. Sampson saw the pair in earnest conversation. First, Lambert smiled and looked roguish. Then, presently, at a farther stage of the talk, he flung up both his hands and performed other gestures indicating surprise and agitation.

"The boy is telling him," thought the Chaplain. When Mr. Warrington came back in an hour, he found his Reverence deep in the composition of a sermon. Harry's face was grave and melancholy; he flung down his hat, buried himself in a great chair, and then came from his lips something like an execration.

"The young ladies are going, and our heart is affected?" said the Chaplain, looking up from his manuscript.

"Heart!" sneered Harry.

"Which of the young ladies is the conqueror, sir? I thought the youngest's eyes followed you about at your ball."

"Confound the little termagant!" broke out Harry. "What does she mean by being so pert to me? She treats me as if I was a fool!"

"And no man is, sir, with a woman!" said the scribe of the sermon.

"Ain't they, Chaplain?" And Harry growled out more naughty words expressive of inward disquiet.

"By the way, have you heard anything of your lost property?" asked the Chaplain, presently looking up from his pages.

Harry said, "No!" with another word which I would not print for the world.

"I begin to suspect, sir, that there was more money than you like to own in that book. I wish I could find some."

"There were notes in it," said Harry, very gloomily, "and—and papers that I am very sorry to lose. What the deuce has come of it? I had it when we dined together."

"I saw you put it in your pocket!" cried the Chaplain. "I saw you take it out and pay at the toy-shop a bill for a gold thimble and work-box for one of your young ladies. Of course you have asked there, sir?"

"Of course I have," says Mr. Warrington, plunged in melancholy.

"Gumbo put you to bed, at least, if I remember right. I was so cut myself that I scarce remember anything. Can you trust those black fellows, sir?"

"I can trust him with my head. With my head?" groaned out Mr. Warrington, bitterly. "I can't trust myself with it."

"'Oh that a man should put an enemy into his mouth to steal away his brains!'"

"You may well call it an enemy, Chaplain. Hang it, I have a great mind to make a vow never to drink another drop! A fellow says anything when he is in drink."

The Chaplain laughed. "You, sir," he said, "are close enough!" And the truth was, that, for the last few days, no amount of wine would unseal Mr. Warrington's lips, when the artless Sampson by chance touched on the subject of his patron's loss.

"And so the little country nymphs are gone, or going, sir?" asked the Chaplain. "They were nice, fresh little things; but I think the mother was the finest woman of the three. I declare, a woman at five-and-thirty or so is at her prime. What do you say, sir?"

Mr. Warrington looked, for a moment, askance at the clergyman. "Confound all women, I say!" muttered the young misogynist. For which sentiment every well-conditioned person will surely rebuke him.

CHAPTER XXXV

ENTANGLEMENTS.

UR good Colonel had, no doubt, taken counsel with his good wife, and they had determined to remove their little Hetty as speedily as possible out of the reach of the charmer. In complaints such as that under which the poor little maiden was supposed to be suffering, the remedy of absence and distance often acts effectually with men; but I believe women are not so easily cured by the alibi treatment. Some of them will go away ever so far, and for ever so long, and the obstinate disease hangs by them, spite of distance or climate. You may whip, abuse, torture, insult them, and still the little deluded creatures will persist in their fidelity. Nay, if I may speak, after profound and extensive study and observation, there are few better ways of securing the faithfulness and admiration of the beautiful partners of our existence than a little judicious ill treatment, a brisk dose of occasional violence as an alterative, and, for general and wholesome diet, a cooling but pretty constant neglect. At sparing intervals, administer small quantities of love and kindness; but not every day, or too often, as this medicine, much taken, loses its effect. Those dear creatures who are the most indifferent to their husbands, are those who are cloyed by too much surfeiting of the sugarplums and lollipops of Love. I have known a young being, with every wish gratified, yawn in her adoring husband's face, and prefer the conversation and *petits soins* of the merest booby and idiot; whilst, on the other hand, I have seen Chloe,—at whom Strephon has flung his bootjack in the morning, or whom he has cursed before the servants at dinner,—come creeping and fondling to his knee at tea-time, when he is comfortable after his little nap and his good wine; and pat his head and play him his favourite tunes; and, when old John the butler, or old Mary the maid, comes in with the bed-candles, look round proudly, as much as to say, *Now*, John, look how good my dearest Henry is! Make your game, gentlemen, then! There is the coaxing, fondling, adoring line, when you are hen-pecked, and Louisa is indifferent, and bored out of her existence. There is the manly, selfish, effectual system, where she answers to the whistle; and comes in at "Down Charge;" and knows her master; and frisks and fawns about him; and nuzzles at his knees; and "licks the hand that's raised"—that's raised to do her good, as (I quote from memory) Mr. Pope finely observes. What used the late lamented O'Connell to say, over whom a grateful country has raised such a magnificent testimonial? "Hereditary bondsmen," he used to remark, "know ye not, who would be free, themselves must *strike the blow?*" Of course you must, in political as in domestic circles. So up with your cudgels, my enslaved, injured boys!

Women will be pleased with these remarks, because they have such a taste for humour and understand irony: and I should not be surprised if young Grubstreet, who corresponds with three penny papers and describes the persons and conversation of gentlemen whom he meets at his "clubs," will say, "I told you so! He advocates the thrashing of women! He has no nobility of soul! He has no heart!" Nor have I, my eminent young Grubstreet! any more than you have ears. Dear ladies! I assure you I am only joking in the above remarks,—I do not advocate the thrashing of your sex at all,—and, as you can't understand the commonest bit of fun, beg leave flatly to tell you, that I consider your sex a hundred times more loving and faithful than ours.

So, what is the use of Hetty's parents taking her home, if the little maid intends to be just as fond of Harry absent as of Harry present? Why not let her see him before Ball and Dobbin are put to, and say "Good-by, Harry! I was very wilful and fractious last night, and you were very kind: but good-by, Harry!" She will show no special emotion: she is so ashamed of her secret, that she will not betray it. Harry is too much preoccupied to discover it for himself. He does not know what grief is lying behind Hetty's glances, or hidden under the artifice of her innocent young smiles. He has, perhaps, a care of his own. He will part from her calmly, and fancy she is happy to get back to her music and her poultry and her flower-garden.

He did not even ride part of the way homewards by the side of his friends' carriage. He had some other party arranged for that afternoon, and when he returned thence, the good Lamberts were gone from Tunbridge Wells. There were their windows open, and the card in one of them signifying that the apartments were once more to let. A little passing sorrow at the blank aspect of the rooms lately enlivened by countenances so frank and friendly, may have crossed the young gentleman's mind; but he dines at the "White Horse" at four o'clock, and eats his dinner and calls fiercely for his bottle. Poor little Hester will choke over her tea about the same hour, when the Lamberts arrive to sleep at the house of their friends at Westerham. The young roses will be wan in her cheeks in the morning, and there will be black circles round her eyes. It was the thunder: the night was hot: she could not sleep: she will be better when she gets home again the next day. And home they come. There is the gate where he fell. There is the bed he lay in, the chair in which he used to sit—what ages seem to have passed! What a gulf between to-day and yesterday! Who is that little child calling her chickens, or watering her roses yonder? Are she and that girl the same Hester Lambert? Why, she is ever so much older than Theo now—Theo, who has always been so composed, and so clever, and so old for her age. But in a night or two Hester has lived—oh, long, long years! So have many besides: and poppy and mandragora will never medicine them to the sweet sleep they tasted yesterday.

Maria Esmond saw the Lambert cavalcade drive away, and felt a grim relief. She looks with hot eyes at Harry when he comes in to his aunt's card-tables, flushed with Barbeau's good wine. He laughs, rattles in reply to his aunt, who asks him which of the girls is his sweetheart? He gaily says he loves them both like sisters. He has never seen a better gentleman, nor better people, than the Lamberts. Why is Lambert not a general? He has been a most distinguished officer: his Royal Highness the Duke is very fond of him. Madame

Bernstein says that Harry must make interest with Lady Yarmouth for his protégé.

"Elle ravvole fous, cher bedid anche!" says Madame Bernstein, mimicking the Countess's German accent. The Baroness is delighted with her boy's success. "You carry off the hearts of all the old women, doesn't he, Maria?" she says, with a sneer at her niece, who quivers under the stab.

"You were quite right, my dear, not to perceive that she cheated at cards, and you play like a grand seigneur," continues Madame de Bernstein.

"*Did* she cheat?" cries Harry, astonished. "I am sure, Ma'am, I saw no unfair play."

"No more did I, my dear, but I am sure she cheated. Bah! every woman cheats, I and Maria included, when we can get a chance. But when you play with the Walmoden, you don't do wrong to lose in moderation: and many men cheat in that way. Cultivate her. She has taken a fancy to your beaux yeux. Why should your Excellency not be Governor of Virginia, sir? You must go and pay your respects to the Duke and his Majesty at Kensington. The Countess of Yarmouth will be your best friend at Court."

"Why should you not introduce me, aunt?" asked Harry.

The old lady's rouged cheek grew a little redder. "I am not in favour at Kensington," she said. "I may have been once; and there are no faces so unwelcome to kings as those they wish to forget. All of us want to forget something or somebody. I dare say our ingénu here would like to wipe a sum or two off the slate. Wouldst thou not, Harry?"

Harry turned red, too, and so did Maria, and his aunt laughed one of those wicked laughs which are not altogether pleasant to hear. What meant those guilty signals on the cheeks of her nephew and niece? What account was scored upon the memory of either, which they were desirous to efface? I fear Madame Bernstein was right, and that most folks have some ugly reckonings written up on their consciences, which we were glad to be quit of.

Had Maria known one of the causes of Harry's disquiet, that middle-aged spinster would have been more unquiet still. For some days he had missed a pocket-book. He had remembered it in his possession on that day when he drank so much claret at the "White Horse," and Gumbo carried him to bed. He sought for it in the morning, but none of his servants had seen it. He had inquired for it at the "White Horse," but there were no traces of it. He could not cry the book, and could only make very cautious inquiries respecting it. He must not have it known that the book was lost. A pretty condition of mind Lady Maria Esmond would be in, if she knew that the outpourings of her heart were in the hands of the public! The letters contained all sorts of disclosures: a hundred family secrets were narrated by the artless correspondent: there was ever so much satire and abuse of persons with whom she and Mr. Warrington came in contact. There were expostulations about his attentions to other ladies. There was scorn, scandal, jokes, appeals, protests of eternal fidelity; the usual farrago, dear Madam, which you may remember you wrote to your Edward, when you were engaged to him, and before you became Mrs. Jones. Would you like those letters to be read by any one else? Do you recollect what you said about the Miss Browns in two or three of those letters, and the unfavourable opinion you expressed of Mrs. Thompson's character? Do you happen to recall the words which you used regarding Jones himself, whom you subsequently married (for in consequence of disputes about the settlements your engagement with Edward was broken off)? and would you like Mr. J. to see those remarks? You know you wouldn't. Then be pleased to withdraw that imputation which you have already cast in your mind upon Lady Maria Esmond. No doubt her letters were very foolish, as most love-letters are, but it does not follow that there was anything wrong in them. They are foolish when written by young folks to one another, and how much more foolish when written by an old man to a young lass, or by an old lass to a young lad! No wonder Lady Maria should not like her letters to be read. Why, the very spelling—but that didn't matter so much in her ladyship's days, and people are just as foolish now, though they spell better. No, it is not the spelling which matters so much; it is the writing at all. I for one, and for the future, am determined never to speak or write my mind out regarding anything or anybody. I intend to say of every woman that she is chaste and handsome; of every man that he is handsome, clever, and rich; of every book that it is delightfully interesting; of Snobmore's manners that they are gentlemanlike; of Screwby's dinners that they are luxurious; of Jawkins's conversation that it is lively and amusing; of Xantippe, that she has a sweet temper! of Jezebel, that her colour is natural; of Bluebeard that he really was most indulgent to his wives, and that very likely they died of bronchitis. What? a word against the spotless Messalina? What an unfavourable view of human nature! What? King Cheops was not a perfect monarch? O you railer at royalty and slanderer of all that is noble and good! When this book is concluded, I shall change the jaundiced livery which my books have worn since I began to lisp in numbers, have rose-coloured coats for them with cherubs on the cover, and all the characters within shall be perfect angels.

Meanwhile we are in a society of men and women, from whose shoulders no sort of wings have sprouted as yet, and who, without any manner of doubt, have their little failings. There is Madame Bernstein : she has fallen asleep after dinner, and eating and drinking too much,—those are her ladyship's little failings. Mr. Harry Warrington has gone to play a match at billiards with Count Caramboli: I suspect idleness is *his* failing. That is what Mr. Chaplain Sampson remarks to Lady Maria, as they are talking together in a low tone, so as not to interrupt Aunt Bernstein's doze in the neighbouring room.

"A gentleman of Mr. Warrington's means can afford to be idle," says Lady Maria. "Why, sure you love cards and billiards yourself, my good Mr. Sampson?"

"I don't say, Madam, my practice is good, only my doctrine is sound," says Mr. Chaplain with a sigh. "This young gentleman should have some employment. He should appear at Court, and enter the service of his country, as befits a man of his station. He should settle down, and choose a woman of a suitable rank as his wife." Sampson looks in her ladyship's face as he speaks.

"Indeed, my cousin is wasting his time," says Lady Maria, blushing slightly.

"Mr. Warrington might see his relatives of his father's family," suggests Mr. Chaplain.

"Suffolk country boobies drinking beer and hallooing after foxes! I don't see anything to be gained by his frequenting them, Mr. Sampson!"

"They are of an ancient family, of which the chief has been knight of the shire these hundred years," says the Chaplain. "I have heard Sir Miles hath a daughter of Mr. Harry's age—and a beauty, too."

"I know nothing, sir, about Sir Miles Warrington, and his daughters, and his beauties!" cries Maria, in a fluster.

"The Baroness stirred—no—her ladyship is in a sweet sleep," says the Chaplain, in a very soft voice. "I fear, Madam, for your ladyship's cousin, Mr. Warrington. I fear for his youth; for designing persons who may get about him; for extravagances, follies, intrigues even into which he will be led, and into which everybody will try to tempt him. His lordship, my kind patron, bade me to come and watch over him, and I am here accordingly, as your ladyship knoweth. I know the follies of young men. Perhaps I have practised them myself. I own it with a blush," adds Mr. Sampson with much unction—not, however, bringing the promised blush forward to corroborate the asserted repentance.

"Between ourselves, I fear Mr. Warrington is in some trouble now, Madam," continues the Chaplain, steadily looking at Lady Maria.

"What, again?" shrieks the lady.

"Hush! Your ladyship's dear invalid!" whispers the Chaplain, again pointing towards Madame Bernstein. "Do you think your cousin has any partiality for any—any member of Mr. Lambert's family? for example, Miss Lambert?"——

"There is nothing between him and Miss Lambert," says Lady Maria.

"Your ladyship is certain?"

"Women are said to have good eyes in such matters, my good Sampson," says my lady, with an easy air. "I thought the little girl seemed to be following him."

"Then I am at fault once more," the frank Chaplain said. "Mr. Warrington said of the young lady, that she ought to go back to her doll, and called her a pert, stuck-up little hussy."

"Ah!" sighed Lady Maria, as if relieved by the news.

"Then, Madam, there must be somebody else," said the Chaplain. "Has he confided nothing to your ladyship?"

"To me, Mr. Sampson? What? Where? How?" exclaims Maria.

"Some six days ago, after we had been dining at the 'White Horse,' and drinking too freely, Mr. Warrington lost a pocket-book containing letters."

"Letters?" gasps Lady Maria

"And probably more money than he likes to own," continues Mr. Sampson, with a grave nod of the head. "He is very much disturbed about the book. We have both made cautious inquiries about it. We have —— Gracious powers, is your ladyship ill?"

Here my Lady Maria gave three remarkably shrill screams, and tumbled off her chair.

"I will see the Prince. I have a right to see him. What's this? —Where am I?—What's the matter?" cries Madame Bernstein, waking up from her sleep. She had been dreaming of old days, no doubt. The old lady shook in all her limbs—her face was very much flushed. She stared about wildly a moment, and then tottered forward on her tortoiseshell cane. "What—what's the matter?" she asked again. "Have you killed her, sir?"

"Some sudden qualm must have come over her ladyship. Shall I cut her laces, Madam? or send for a doctor?" cries the Chaplain, with every look of innocence and alarm.

"What has passed between you, sir?" asked the old lady, fiercely.

"I give you my honour, Madam, I have done I don't know what. I but mentioned that Mr. Warrington had lost a pocket-book containing letters, and my lady swooned, as you see."

Madame Bernstein dashed water on her niece's face. A feeble moan told presently that the lady was coming to herself.

The Baroness looked sternly after Mr. Sampson, as she sent him away on his errand for the doctor. Her aunt's grim countenance was of little comfort to poor Maria when she saw it on waking up from her swoon.

"What has happened?" asked the younger lady, bewildered and gasping.

"Hm! *You* know best what has happened, Madam, I suppose. What hath happened before in our family?" cried the old Baroness, glaring at her niece with savage eyes.

"Ah, yes! the letters have been lost—ach lieber Himmel!" And Maria, as she would sometimes do, when much moved, began to speak in the language of her mother.

"Yes! the seal has been broken, and the letters have been lost. 'Tis the old story of the Esmonds," cried the elder, bitterly.

"Seal broken, letters lost? What do you mean, aunt?" asked Maria, faintly.

"I mean that my mother was the only honest woman that ever entered the family!" cried the Baroness, stamping her foot. "And she was a parson's daughter of no family in particular, or she would have gone wrong, too. Good heavens! is it decreed that we are all to be . . . ?"

"To be what, Madam?" cried Maria.

"To be what my Lady Queensberry said we were last night. To be what we *are!* You know the word for it!" cried the indignant old woman. "I say, what has come to the whole race? Your father's mother was an honest woman, Maria. Why did I leave her? Why couldn't you remain so?"

"Madam!" exclaims Maria, "I declare, before heaven, I am as ——"

"Bah! Don't madam me! Don't call heaven to witness—there's nobody by! And if you swore to your innocence till the rest of your teeth dropped out of your mouth, my Lady Maria Esmond, I would not believe you!"

"Ah! it was you told him!" gasped Maria. She recognized an arrow out of her aunt's quiver.

"I saw some folly going on between you and the boy, and I told him that you were as old as his mother. Yes, I did! Do you suppose I am going to let Henry Esmond's boy fling himself and his wealth away upon such a battered old rock as you? The boy shan't be robbed and cheated in our family. Not a shilling of mine shall any of you have if he comes to any harm amongst you."

"Ah! you told him!" cried Maria, with a sudden burst of rebellion. "Well, then! I'd have you to know that I don't care a penny, Madam, for your paltry money! I have Mr. Harry Warrington's word—yes, and his letters—and I know he will die rather than break it."

"He will die if he keeps it!" (Maria shrugged her shoulders.) "But you don't care for that—you've no more heart ——"

"Than my father's sister, Madam!" cries Maria again. The younger woman, ordinarily submissive, had turned upon her persecutor.

"Ah! Why did not I marry an honest man?" said the old lady, shaking her head sadly. "Henry Esmond was noble and good, and perhaps might have made me so. But no, no—we have all got the taint in us—all! You don't mean to sacrifice this boy, Maria?"

"Madame ma tante, do you take me for a fool at my age?" asks Maria.

"Set him free! I'll give you five thousand pounds—in my—in my will, Maria. I will, on my honour!"

"When you were young, and you liked Colonel Esmond, you threw him aside for an earl, and the earl for a duke?"

"Yes."

"Eh! Bon sang ne peut mentir! I have no money, I have no friends. My father was a spendthrift, my brother is a beggar. I have Mr. Warrington's word, and I know, Madam, he will keep it. And that's what I tell your ladyship!" cries Lady Maria with a wave of her hand. "Suppose my letters are published to all the world to-morrow? Après? I know they contain things I would as lieve not tell. Things not about *me* alone. *Comment!* Do you suppose there are no stories but mine in the family? It is not my letters that I am afraid of, so long as I have his, Madam. Yes, his and his word, and I trust them both."

"I will send to my merchant, and give you the money now, Maria," pleaded the old lady.

"No, I shall have my pretty Harry, and ten times five thousand pounds!" cries Maria.

"Not till his mother's death, Madam, who is just your age!"

"We can afford to wait, aunt. At my age, as you say, I am not so eager as young chits for a husband."

"But to wait my sister's death, at least, is a drawback?"

"Offer me ten thousand pounds, Madame Tusher, and then we will see!" cries Maria.

"I have not so much money in the world, Maria," said the old lady.

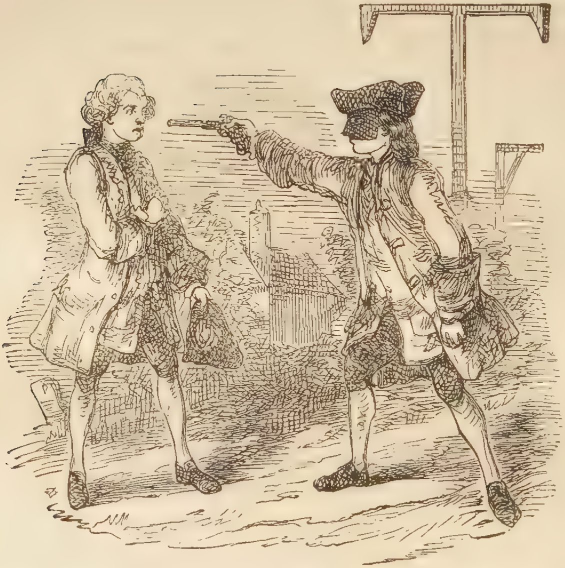
"Then, Madam, let me make what I can for myself!" says Maria.

"Ah, if he heard you?"

"Après? I have his word. I know he will keep it. I can afford to wait, Madam," and she flung out of the room, just as the Chaplain returned. It was Madame Bernstein who wanted cordials now. She was immensely moved and shocked by the news which had been thus suddenly brought to her.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

WHICH SEEMS TO MEAN MISCHIEF.



THOUGH she had clearly had the worst of the battle described in the last chapter, the Baroness Bernstein, when she next met her niece, showed no rancour or anger. "Of course, my Lady Maria," she said, "you can't suppose that I, as Harry Warrington's near relative, can be pleased at the idea of his marrying a woman who is as old as his mother, and has not a penny to her fortune; but if he chooses to do so silly a thing, the affair is none of mine; and I doubt whether I should have been much inclined to be taken *au sérieux* with regard to that offer of five thousand pounds which I made in the heat of our talk. So it was already at Castlewood that this pretty affair was arranged? Had I known how far it had gone, my dear, I should have spared some needless opposition. When a pitcher is broken, what railing can mend it?"

"Madam!" here interposed Maria.

"Pardon me—I mean nothing against your ladyship's honour or character, which, no doubt, are quite safe. Harry says so, and you say so—what more can one ask?"

"You have talked to Mr. Warrington, Madam?"

"And he has owned that he made you a promise at Castlewood: that you have it in his writing."

"Certainly I have, Madam!" says Lady Maria.

"Ah!" (the elder lady did not wince at this.) "And I own, too, that at first I put a wrong construction upon the tenor of your letters to him. They implicate other members of the family —"

"Who have spoken most wickedly of me, and endeavoured to prejudice me in every way in my dear Mr. Warrington's eyes. Yes, Madam, I own I have written against them, to justify myself."

"But, of course, are pained to think that any wretch should get possession of stories to the disadvantage of our family, and make them public scandal. Hence your disquiet just now."

"Exactly so," said Lady Maria. "From Mr. Warrington I could have nothing concealed henceforth, and spoke freely to him. But that is a very different thing from wishing all the world to know the disputes of a noble family."

"Upon my word, Maria, I admire you, and have done you injustice these—these twenty years, let us say."

"I am very glad, Madam, that you end by doing me justice at all," said the niece.

"When I saw you last night, opening the ball with my nephew, can you guess what I thought of, my dear?"

"I really have no idea what the Baroness de Bernstein thought of," said Lady Maria, haughtily.

"I remembered that you had performed to that very tune with the dancing-master at Kensington, my dear!"

"Madam, it was an infamous calumny."

"By which the poor dancing-master got a cudgelling for nothing!"

"It is cruel and unkind, Madam, to recall that calumny—and I shall beg to decline living any longer with any one who utters it," continued Maria, with great spirit.

"You wish to go home? I can fancy you won't like Tunbridge. It will be very hot for you if those letters are found."

"There was not a word against you in them, Madam: about that I can make your mind easy."

"So Harry said, and did your ladyship justice. Well, my dear, we are tired of one another, and shall be better apart for a while."

"That is precisely my own opinion," said Lady Maria, dropping a curtsey.

"Mr. Sampson can escort you to Castlewood. You and your maid can take a post-chaise."

"We can take a post-chaise, and Mr. Sampson can escort me," echoed the younger lady. "You see, Madam, I act like a dutiful niece."

"Do you know, my dear, I have a notion that Sampson has got the letters?" said the Baroness, frankly.

"I confess that such a notion has passed through my own mind."

"And you want to go home in the chaise, and coax the letters from him? Delilah! Well, they can be no good to me, and I trust you may get them. When will you go? The sooner the better, you say? We are women of the world, Maria. We only call names when we are in a passion. We don't want each other's company; and we part on good terms. Shall we go to my Lady Yarmouth's? 'Tis her night. There is nothing like a change of scene after one of those little nervous attacks you have had, and cards drive away unpleasant thoughts better than any doctor."

Lady Maria agreed to go to Lady Yarmouth's cards, and was dressed and ready first, awaiting her aunt in the drawing-room. Madame Bernstein, as she came down, remarked Maria's door was left open. "She has the letters upon her," thought the old lady. And the pair went off to their entertainment in their respective chairs, and exhibited towards each other that charming cordiality and respect which women can show after, and even during the bitterest quarrels.

That night, on their return from the Countess's drum, Mrs. Brett, Madame Bernstein's maid, presented herself to my Lady Maria's call, when that lady rang her hand-bell upon retiring to her room. Betty, Mrs. Brett was ashamed to say, was not in a fit state to come before my lady. Betty had been a-junketing and merry-making with Mr. Warrington's black gentleman, with my Lord Bamborough's valet, and several more ladies and gentlemen of that station, and the liquor—Mrs. Brett was shocked to own it—had proved too much for Mrs. Betty. Should Mrs. Brett undress my lady? My lady said she would undress without a maid, and gave Mrs. Brett leave to withdraw. "She has the letters in her stays," thought

Madame Bernstein. They had bidden each other an amicable good-night on the stairs.

Mrs. Betty had a scolding the next morning, when she came to wait on her mistress, from the closet adjoining Lady Maria's apartment in which Betty lay. She owned, with contrition, her partiality for rum-punch, which Mr. Gumbo had the knack of brewing most delicate. She took her scolding with meekness, and, having performed her usual duties about her lady's person, retired.

Now Betty was one of the Castlewood girls who had been so fascinated by Gumbo, and was a very good-looking blue-eyed lass, upon whom Mr. Case, Madame Bernstein's confidential man, had also cast the eyes of affection. Hence, between Messrs. Gumbo and Case, there had been jealousies and even quarrels; which had caused Gumbo, who was of a peaceful disposition, to be rather shy of the Baroness's gentlemen, the chief of whom vowed he would break the bones, or have the life of Gumbo, if he persisted in his attentions to Mrs. Betty.

But on the night of the rum-punch, though Mr. Case found Gumbo and Mrs. Betty whispering in the doorway, in the cool breeze, and Gumbo would have turned pale with fear had he been able so to do, no one could be more gracious than Mr. Case. It was he who proposed the bowl of punch, which was brewed and drunk in Mrs. Betty's room, and which Gumbo concocted with exquisite skill. He complimented Gumbo on his music. Though a sober man ordinarily, he insisted upon more and more drinking, until poor Mrs. Betty was reduced to the state which occasioned her lady's just censure.

As for Mr. Case himself, who lay out of the house, he was so ill with the punch, that he kept his bed the whole of the next day, and did not get strength to make his appearance, and wait on his ladies, until supper-time; when his mistress good-naturedly rebuked him, saying that it was not often he sinned in that way.

"Why, Case, I could have made oath it was you I saw on horseback this morning galloping on the London road," said Mr. Warrington, who was supping with his relatives.

"Me! law bless you, sir! I was a-bed, and I thought my head would come off with the aching. I ate a bit at six o'clock, and drunk a deal of small beer, and I am almost my own man again now. But that Gumbo, saving your honour's presence, I won't taste none of his punch again." And the honest major-domo went on with his duties among the bottles and glasses.

As they sat after their meal, Madame Bernstein was friendly enough. She prescribed strong fortifying drinks for Maria, against the recurrence of her fainting fits. The lady had such attacks not unfrequently. She urged her to consult her London physician, and to send up an account of her case by Harry. By Harry? asked the lady. Yes. Harry was going for two days on an errand for his aunt to London. "I do not care to tell you, my dear, that it is on business which will do him good. I wish Mr. Draper to put him into my will, and as I am going travelling upon a round of visits when you and I part, I think, for security, I shall ask Mr. Warrington to take my trinket-box in his post-chaise to London with him, for there have been robberies of late, and I have no fancy for being stopped by highwaymen."

Maria looked blank at the notion of the young gentleman's departure, but hoped that she might have his escort back to Castlewood, whither her elder brother had now returned. "Nay," says his aunt, "the lad hath been tied to our apron-strings long enough. A day in London will do him no harm. He can perform my errand for me and be back with you by Saturday."

"I would offer to accompany Mr. Warrington, but I preach on Friday before her ladyship," says Mr. Sampson. He was anxious that my Lady Yarmouth should judge of his powers as a preacher; and Madame Bernstein had exerted her influence with the king's favourite to induce her to hear the chaplain.

Harry relished the notion of a rattling journey to London and a day or two of sport there. He promised that his pistols were good, and that he would hand the diamonds over in safety to the banker's strong-room. Would he occupy his aunt's London house? No, that would be a dreary lodging with only a housemaid and a groom in charge of it. He would go to the "Star and Garter" in Pall Mall, or to an inn in Covent Garden. "Ah! I have often talked over that journey," said Harry, his countenance saddening.

"And with whom, sir?" asked Lady Maria.

"With one who promised to make it with me," said the young man, thinking, as he always did, with an extreme tenderness of the lost brother.

"He has more heart, my good Maria, than some of us!" says

Harry's aunt, witnessing his emotion. Uncontrollable gusts of grief would, not unfrequently, still pass over our young man. The parting from his brother; the scenes and circumstancesof George's fall last year; the recollection of his words, or of some excursion at home which they had planned together; would recur to him and overcome him. "I doubt, Madam," whispered the Chaplain, demurely, to Madame Bernstein, after one of these bursts of sorrow, "whether some folks in England would suffer quite so much at the death of their elder brother."

But, of course, this sorrow was not to be perpetual; and we can fancy Mr. Warrington setting out on his London journey eagerly enough, and very gay and happy, if it must be owned, to be rid of his elderly attachment. Yes. There was no help for it. At Castlewood, on one unlucky evening, he had made an offer of his heart and himself to his mature cousin, and she had accepted the foolish lad's offer. But the marriage now was out of the question. He must consult his mother. She was the mistress for life of the Virginian property. Of course, she would refuse her consent to such a union. The thought of it was deferred to a late period. Meanwhile, it hung like a weight round the young man's neck, and caused him no small remorse and disquiet.

No wonder that his spirits rose more gaily as he came near London, and that he looked with delight from his post-chaise windows upon the city as he advanced towards it. No highwayman stopped our traveller on Blackheath. Yonder are the gleaming domes of Greenwich, canopied with woods. There is the famous Thames with its countless shipping; there actually is the Tower of London. Look, Gumbo! "There is the Tower!" "Yes, master," says Gumbo, who has never heard of the Tower; but Harry has, and remembers how he has read about it in Howell's "Medulla," and how he and his brother used to play at the Tower, and he thinks with delight now, how he is actually going to see the armour and the jewels and the lions. They pass through Southwark and over that famous London Bridge which was all covered with houses like a street two years ago. Now there is only a single gate left, and that is coming down. Then the chaise rolls through the city; and, "Look, Gumbo, that is Saint Paul's!" "Yes, master; Saint Paul's," says Gumbo, obsequiously, but little struck by the beauties of the architecture. And so by the well-known course we reach the Temple, and Gumbo and his master look up with awe at the rebel heads on Temple Bar.

The chaise drives to Mr. Draper's chambers in Middle Temple Lane, where Harry handed the precious box over to Mr. Draper, and a letter from his aunt, which the gentleman read with some interest seemingly, and carefully put away. He then consigned the trinket-box to his strong closet, went into the adjoining room, taking his clerk with him, and then was at Mr. Warrington's service to take him to an hotel. An hotel in Covent Garden was fixed upon as the best place for his residence. "I shall have to keep you for two or three days, Mr. Warrington," the lawyer said. "I don't think the papers which the Baroness wants can be ready until then. Meanwhile I am at your service to see the town. I live out of it myself, and have a little box at Camberwell, where I shall be proud to have the honour of entertaining Mr. Warrington; but a young man, I suppose, will like his inn and his liberty best, sir?"

Harry said yes, he thought the inn would be best; and the post-chaise, and a clerk of Mr. Draper's inside, was despatched to the "Bedford," whither the two gentlemen agreed to walk on foot.

Mr. Draper and Mr. Warrington sat and talked for a while. The Drapers, father and son, had been lawyers time out of mind to the Esmond family, and the attorney related to the young gentleman numerous stories regarding his ancestors of Castlewood. Of the present Earl Mr. Draper was no longer the agent: his father and his lordship had had differences, and his lordship's business had been taken elsewhere: but the Baroness was still their honoured client, and very happy indeed was Mr. Draper to think that her ladyship was so well disposed towards her nephew.

As they were taking their hats to go out, a young clerk of the house stopped his principal in the passage, and said: "If you please, sir, them papers of the Baroness was given to her ladyship's man, Mr. Case, two days ago."

"Just please to mind your own business, Mr. Brown," said the lawyer rather sharply. "This way, Mr. Warrington. Our Temple stairs are rather dark. Allow me to show you the way."

Harry saw Mr. Draper darting a Parthian look of anger at Mr. Brown. "So it *was* Case I saw on the London Road two days ago," he thought. "What business brought the old fox to London?"

Wherewith, not choosing to be inquisitive about other folks' affairs, he dismissed the subject from his mind.

Whither should they go first? First, Harry was for going to see the place where his grandfather and Lord Castlewood had fought a duel fifty-six years ago, in Leicester Field. Mr. Draper knew the place well, and all about the story. They might take Covent Garden on their way to Leicester Field, and see that Mr. Warrington was comfortably lodged. "And order dinner," says Mr. Warrington. No, Mr. Draper could not consent to that. Mr. Warrington must be so obliging as to honour him on that day. In fact, he had made so bold as to order a collation from the "Cock." Mr. Warrington could not decline an invitation so pressing, and walked away gaily with his friend, passing under that arch where the heads were, and taking off his hat to them, much to the lawyer's astonishment.

"They were gentlemen who died for their king, sir. My dear brother George and I always said we would salute 'em when we saw 'em," Mr. Warrington said.

"You'll have a mob at your heels if you do, sir," said the alarmed lawyer.

"Confound the mob, sir," said Mr. Harry, loftily, but the passers-by, thinking about their own affairs, did not take any notice of Mr. Warrington's conduct; and he walked up the thronging Strand, gazing with delight upon all he saw, remembering, I dare say, for all his life after, the sights and impressions there presented to him, but maintaining a discreet reserve; for he did not care to let the lawyer know how much he was moved, or the public perceive that he was a stranger. He did not hear much of his companion's talk, though the latter chattered ceaselessly on the way. Nor was Mr. Draper displeased by the young Virginian's silent and haughty demeanour. A hundred years ago a gentleman was a gentleman, and his attorney his very humble servant.

The chamberlain at the "Bedford" showed Mr. Warrington to his rooms, bowing before him with delightful obsequiousness, for Gumbo had already trumpeted his master's greatness, and Mr. Draper's clerk announced that the new-comer was a "high fellar." Then, the rooms surveyed, the two gentlemen went to Leicester Field, Mr. Gumbo strutting behind his master: and, having looked at the scene of his grandsire's wound, and poor Lord Castlewood's tragedy, they returned to the Temple to Mr. Draper's chambers.

Who was that shabby-looking big man Mr. Warrington bowed to as they went out after dinner for a walk in the gardens? That was Mr. Johnson, an author, whom he had met at Tunbridge Wells. "Take the advice of a man of the world, sir," says Mr. Draper, eyeing the shabby man of letters very superciliously; "the less you have to do with that kind of person, the better. The business we have into our office about them literary men is not very pleasant, I can tell you." "Indeed!" says Mr. Warrington. He did not like his new friend the more as the latter grew more familiar. The theatres were shut. Should they go to Sadler's Wells? or Marybone Gardens? or Ranelagh? or how? "Not Ranelagh," says Mr. Draper, "because there's none of the nobility in town;" but, seeing in the newspaper that at the entertainment at Sadler's Wells, Islington, there would be the most singular kind of diversion on eight hand-bells by Mr. Franklyn, as well as the surprising performances of Signora Cattarina, Harry wisely determined that he would go to Marybone Gardens, where they had a concert of music, a choice of tea, coffee, and all sorts of wines, and the benefit of Mr. Draper's ceaseless conversation. The lawyer's obsequiousness only ended at Harry's bedroom door, where, with haughty grandeur, the young gentleman bade his talkative host good-night.

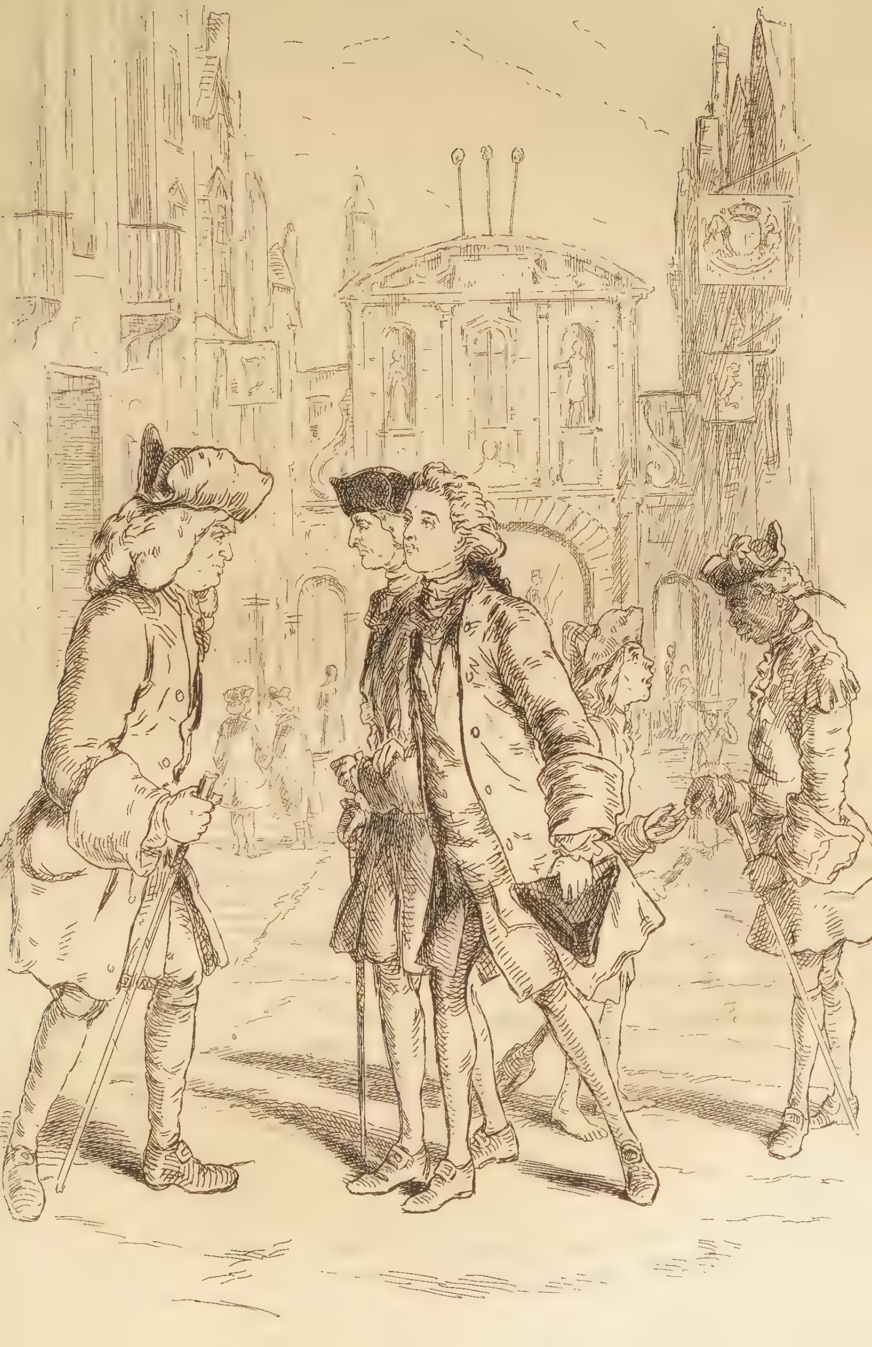
The next morning, Mr. Warrington, arrayed in his brocade bedgown, took his breakfast, read the newspaper, and enjoyed his ease in his inn. He read in the paper news from his own country. And when he saw the words, Williamsburg, Virginia, June 7th, his eyes grew dim somehow. He had just had letters by that packet of June 7th, but his mother did not tell how—"A great number of the principal gentry of the colony have associated themselves under the command of the Honourable Peyton Randolph, Esquire, to march to the relief of their distressed fellow-subjects, and revenge the cruelties of the French and their barbarous allies. They are in a uniform: viz., a plain blue frock, nanquin or brown waistcoats and breeches, and plain hats. They are armed each with a light firelock, a brace of pistols, and a cutting sword."

"Ah, why ain't we there, Gumbo?" cried out Harry.

"Why ain't we dar?" shouted Gumbo.

"Why am I here, dangling at women's trains?" continued the Virginian.

"Think dangling at women's trains very pleasant, Master Harry!"



A RENCONTRE IN FLEET STREET.

says the materialistic Gumbo, who was also very little affected by some further home news which his master read; viz., that "The Lovely Sally," Virginia ship, had been taken in sight of port by a French privateer.

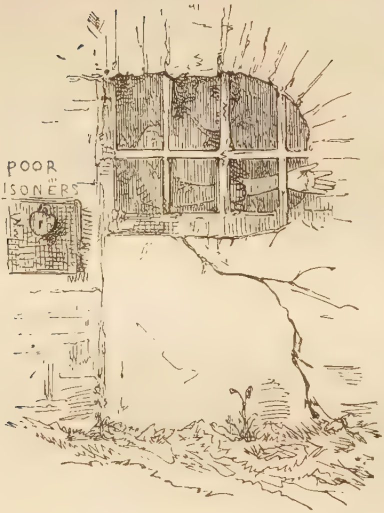
And now, reading that the finest mare in England, and a pair of very genteel bay geldings, were to be sold at the "Bull" inn, the lower end of Hatton Garden, Harry determined to go and look at the animals, and inquired his way to the place. He then and there bought the genteel bay geldings, and paid for them with easy generosity. He never said what he did on that day, being shy of appearing like a stranger; but it is believed that he took a coach and went to Westminster Abbey, from which he bade the coachman drive him to the Tower, then to Mrs. Salmon's Waxwork, then to Hyde Park and Kensington Palace; then he had given orders to go to the Royal Exchange, but catching a glimpse of Covent Garden, on his way to the Exchange, he bade Jehu take him to his inn, and cut short his enumeration of places to which he had been, by flinging the fellow a guinea.

Mr. Draper had called in his absence, and said he would come again; but Mr. Warrington, having dined sumptuously by himself, went off nimbly to Marybone Gardens again, in the same noble company.

As he issued forth the next day, the bells of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, were ringing for morning prayers, and reminded him that friend Sampson was going to preach his sermon. Harry smiled. He had begun to have a shrewd and just opinion of the value of Mr. Sampson's sermons.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

IN WHICH VARIOUS MATCHES ARE FOUGHT.



EADING in the *London Advertiser*, which was served to his worship with his breakfast, an invitation to all lovers of manly British sport to come and witness a trial of skill between the great champions Sutton and Figg, Mr. Warrington determined upon attending these performances, and accordingly proceeded to the Wooden House, in Marybone Fields, driving thither the pair of horses which he had purchased on the previous day. The young charioteer did not know the road very well, and veered and tacked very much more than was needful upon his journey from Covent Garden, losing himself in the green lanes behind Mr. Whitfield's round Tabernacle of Tottenham Road, and the fields in the midst of which Middlesex Hospital stood. He reached his destination at length, however, and found no small company assembled to witness the valorous achievements of the two champions.

A crowd of London blackguards was gathered round the doors of this temple of British valour; together with the horses and equipages of a few persons of fashion, who came, like Mr. Warrington, to patronize the sport. A variety of beggars and cripples hustled round the young gentleman, and whined to him for charity. Shoeblack boys tumbled over each other for the privilege of blacking his honour's boots; nosegay women and flying fruiterers plied Mr. Gumbo with their wares; piemen, pads, tramps, strollers of every variety, hung round the battle-ground. A flag was flying upon the building: and, on to the stage in front, accompanied by a drummer and a horn-blower, a manager repeatedly issued to announce to the crowd that the noble English sports were just about to begin.

Mr. Warrington paid his money, and was accommodated with a seat in a gallery commanding a perfect view of the platform whereon the sports were performed; Mr. Gumbo took his seat in the amphitheatre below; or, when tired, issued forth into the outer world to drink a pot of beer, or play a game at cards with his brother lacqueys, and the gentlemen's coachmen on the boxes of the carriages waiting without. Lacqueys, liveries, footmen—the old society was encumbered with a prodigious quantity of these. Gentle men or women could scarce move without one, sometimes two or three, vassals in attendance. Every theatre had its footman's gallery: an army of the liveried race hustled around every chapel-door: they swarmed in ante-rooms: they sprawled in halls and on landings: they guzzled, devoured, debauched, cheated, played cards, bullied visitors for vails:—that noble old race of footmen is well nigh gone. A few thousand of them may still be left among us. Grand, tall, beautiful, melancholy, we still behold them on levee days, with their nosegays and their buckles, their plush and their powder. So have I seen in America specimens, nay camps and villages of Red Indians. But the race is doomed. The fatal decree has gone forth, and Uncas with his tomahawk and eagle's plume, and Jeames with his cocked hat and long cane, are passing out of the world where they once walked in glory.

Before the principal combatants made their appearance, minor warriors and exercises were exhibited. A boxing-match came off, but neither of the men were very game or severely punished, so that Mr. Warrington and the rest of the spectators had but little pleasure out of that encounter. Then ensued some cudgel-playing; but the heads broken were of so little note, and the wounds given so trifling and unsatisfactory, that no wonder the company began to hiss, grumble, and show other signs of discontent. "The masters, the masters!" shouted the people, whereupon those famous champions at length thought fit to appear.

The first who walked up the steps to the stage was the intrepid Sutton, sword in hand, who saluted the company with his warlike weapon, making an especial bow and salute to a private box or gallery in which sat a stout gentleman, who was seemingly a person of importance. Sutton was speedily followed by the famous Figg, to whom the stout gentleman waved a hand of approbation. Both men were in their shirts, their heads were shaven clean, but bore the cracks and scars of many former glorious battles. On his burly sword-arm, each intrepid champion wore an "armiger," or ribbon of his colour. And now the gladiators shook hands, and, as a contemporary poet says: "The word it was bilboe." *

At the commencement of the combat the great Figg dealt a blow so tremendous at his opponent, that had it encountered the other's head, that comely noddle would have been shorn off as clean as the carving-knife chops the carrot. But Sutton received his adversary's blade on his own sword, whilst Figg's blow was delivered so mightily that the weapon brake in his hands, less constant than the heart of him who wielded it. Other swords were now delivered to the warriors. The first blood drawn spouted from the panting side of Figg amidst a yell of delight from Sutton's supporters; but the veteran appealing to his audience, and especially, as it seemed, to the stout individual in the private gallery, showed that his sword broken in the previous encounter had caused the wound.

Whilst the parley occasioned by this incident was going on, Mr. Warrington saw a gentleman in a riding-frock and plain scratch-wig enter the box devoted to the stout personage, and recognized with pleasure his Tunbridge Wells friend, my Lord of March and Ruglen. Lord March, who was by no means prodigal of politeness, seemed to show singular deference to the stout gentleman, and Harry remarked how his lordship received, with a profound bow, some bank bills which the other took out from a pocket-book and handed to him. Whilst thus engaged, Lord March spied out our Virginian, and, his interview with the stout personage finished, my lord came over to Harry's gallery and warmly greeted his young friend. They sat and beheld the combat waging with various success, but with immense skill and valour on both sides. After the warriors had sufficiently fought with swords, they fell to with the quarter-staff, and the result of this long and delightful battle was, that victory remained with her ancient champion Figg.

Whilst the warriors were at battle, a thunderstorm had broken over the building, and Mr. Warrington gladly enough accepted a seat

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* The antiquarian reader knows the pleasant poem in the sixth volume of Dodsley's Collection, in which the above combat is described.

in my Lord March's chariot, leaving his own phaeton to be driven home by his groom. Harry was in great delectation with the noble sight he had witnessed: he pronounced this indeed to be something like sport, and of the best he had seen since his arrival in England: and, as usual, associating any pleasure which he enjoyed with the desire that the dear companion of his boyhood should share the amusement in common with him, he began by sighing out, "I wish" . . . . then he stopped. "No, I don't," says he.

"What do you wish and what don't you wish?" asked Lord March.

"I was thinking, my lord, of my elder brother, and wished he had been with me. We had promised to have our sport together, at home, you see; and many's the time we talked of it. But he wouldn't have liked this rough sort of sport, and didn't care for fighting, though he was the bravest lad alive."

"Oh! he was the bravest lad alive, was he?" asks my lord, lolling on his cushion, and eyeing his Virginian friend with some curiosity.

"You should have seen him in a quarrel with a very gallant officer, our friend—an absurd affair, but it was hard to keep George off him. I never saw a fellow so cool, nor more savage and determined, God help me. Ah! I wish for the honour of the country, you know, that he could have come here instead of me, and shown you a real Virginian gentleman."

"Nay, sir, you'll do very well. What is this I hear of Lady Yarmouth taking you into favour?" said the amused nobleman.

"I will do as well as another. I can ride, and, I think, I can shoot better than George; but then my brother had the head, sir, the head!" says Harry, tapping his own honest skull. "Why, I give you my word, my lord, that he had read almost every book that was ever written; could play both on the fiddle and harpsichord, could compose poetry and sermons most elegant. What can I do? I am only good to ride and play at cards, and drink Burgundy." And the penitent hung down his head. "But them I can do as well as most fellows, you see. In fact, my lord, I'll back myself," he resumed, to the other's great amusement.

Lord March relished the young man's *naïveté,* as the jaded voluptuary still to the end always can relish the juicy wholesome mutton-chop. "By gad, Mr. Warrington," says he, "you ought to be taken to Exeter Change, and put in a show."

"And for why?"

"A gentleman from Virginia who has lost his elder brother and absolutely regrets him. The breed ain't known in this country. Upon my honour and conscience, I believe that you would like to have him back again."

"Believe!" cries the Virginian, growing red in the face.

"That is, you believe you believe you would like him back again. But depend on it you wouldn't. 'Tis not in human nature, sir; not as I read it, at least. Here are some fine houses we are coming to. That at the corner is Sir Richard Littleton's, that great one was my Lord Bingley's. 'Tis a pity they do nothing better with this great empty space of Cavendish Square than fence it with these unsightly boards. By George! I don't know where the town's running. There's Montagu House made into a confounded Don Saltero's museum, with books and stuffed birds and rhinoceroses. They have actually run a cursed cut—New Road they call it—at the back of Bedford House Gardens, and spoiled the Duke's comfort, though I guess they will console him in the pocket. I don't know where the town will stop. Shall we go down Tyburn Road and the Park, or through Swallow Street, and into the habitable quarter of the town? We can dine at Pall Mall, or, if you like, with you; and we can spend the evening as you like—with the Queen of Spades, or . . . ."

"With the Queen of Spades, if your lordship pleases," says Mr. Warrington, blushing. So the equipage drove to his hotel in Covent Garden, where the landlord came forward with his usual obsequiousness, and recognizing my Lord of March and Ruglen, bowed his wig on to my lord's shoes in his humble welcomes to his lordship. A rich young English peer in the reign of George the Second; a wealthy patrician in the reign of Augustus; which would you rather have been? There is a question for any young gentlemen's debating-clubs of the present day.

The best English dinner which could be produced, of course, was at the service of the young Virginian and his noble friend. After dinner came wine in plenty, and of quality good enough even for the epicurean Earl. Over the wine there was talk of going to see the fireworks at Vauxhall, or else of cards. Harry, who had never seen a firework beyond an exhibition of a dozen squibs at Williamsburg on the fifth of November (which he thought a sublime display), would have liked the Vauxhall, but yielded to his guest's preference for picquet; and they were very soon absorbed in that game.

Harry began by winning as usual; but, in the course of a half-hour, the luck turned and favoured my Lord March, who was at first very surly, when Mr. Draper, Mr. Warrington's man of business, came bowing into the room, where he accepted Harry's invitation to sit and drink. Mr. Warrington always asked everybody to sit and drink, and partake of his best. Had he a crust, he would divide it; had he a haunch he would share it; had he a jug of water, he would drink about with a kindly spirit; had he a bottle of Burgundy, it was gaily drunk with a thirsty friend. And don't fancy the virtue is common. You read of it in books, my dear sir, and fancy that you have it yourself because you give six dinners of twenty people and pay your acquaintance all round; but the welcome, the friendly spirit, the kindly heart? Believe me, these are rare qualities in our selfish world. We may bring them with us from the country when we are young, but they mostly wither after transplantation, and droop and perish in the stifling London air.

Draper did not care for wine very much, but it delighted the lawyer to be in the company of a great man. He protested that he liked nothing better than to see picquet played by two consummate players and men of fashion; and, taking a seat, undismayed by the sidelong scowls of his lordship, surveyed the game between the gentlemen. Harry was not near a match for the experienced player of the London clubs. To-night, too, Lord March held better cards to aid his skill.

What their stakes were was no business of Mr. Draper's. The gentlemen said they would play for shillings, and afterwards counted up their gains and losses, with scarce any talking, and that in an under tone. A bow on both sides, a perfectly grave and polite manner on the part of each, and the game went on.

But it was destined to a second interruption, which brought an execration from Lord March's lips. First was heard a scuffling without—then a whispering—then an outcry as of a woman in tears, and then, finally, a female rushed into the room, and produced that explosion of naughty language from Lord March.

"I wish your women would take some other time for coming, confound 'em," says my lord, laying his cards down in a pet.

"What, Mrs. Betty!" cried Harry.

Indeed it was no other than Mrs. Betty, Lady Maria's maid; and Gumbo stood behind her, his fine countenance beslobbered with tears.

"What has happened?" asks Mr. Warrington, in no little perturbation of spirit. "The Baroness is well?"

"Help! help! sir, your honour!" ejaculates Mrs. Betty, and proceeds to fall on her knees.

"Help whom?"

A howl ensues from Gumbo.

"Gumbo, you scoundrel! has anything happened between Mrs. Betty and you?" asks the black's master.

Mr. Gumbo steps back with great dignity, laying his hand on his heart, and saying, "No, sir; nothing hab happened 'twix' this lady and me."

"It's my mistress, sir," cries Betty. "Help! help! here's the letter she have wrote, sir! They have gone and took her, sir!"

"Is it only that old Molly Esmond? She's known to be over head and heels in debt! Dry your eyes in the next room, Mrs. Betty, and let me and Mr. Warrington go on with our game," says my lord, taking up his cards.

"Help! help her!" cries Betty again. "Oh, Mr. Harry! you won't be a-going on with your cards, when my lady calls out to you to come and help her! Your honour used to come quick enough when my lady used to send me to fetch you at Castlewood!"

"Confound you! can't you hold your tongue?" says my lord, with more choice words and oaths.

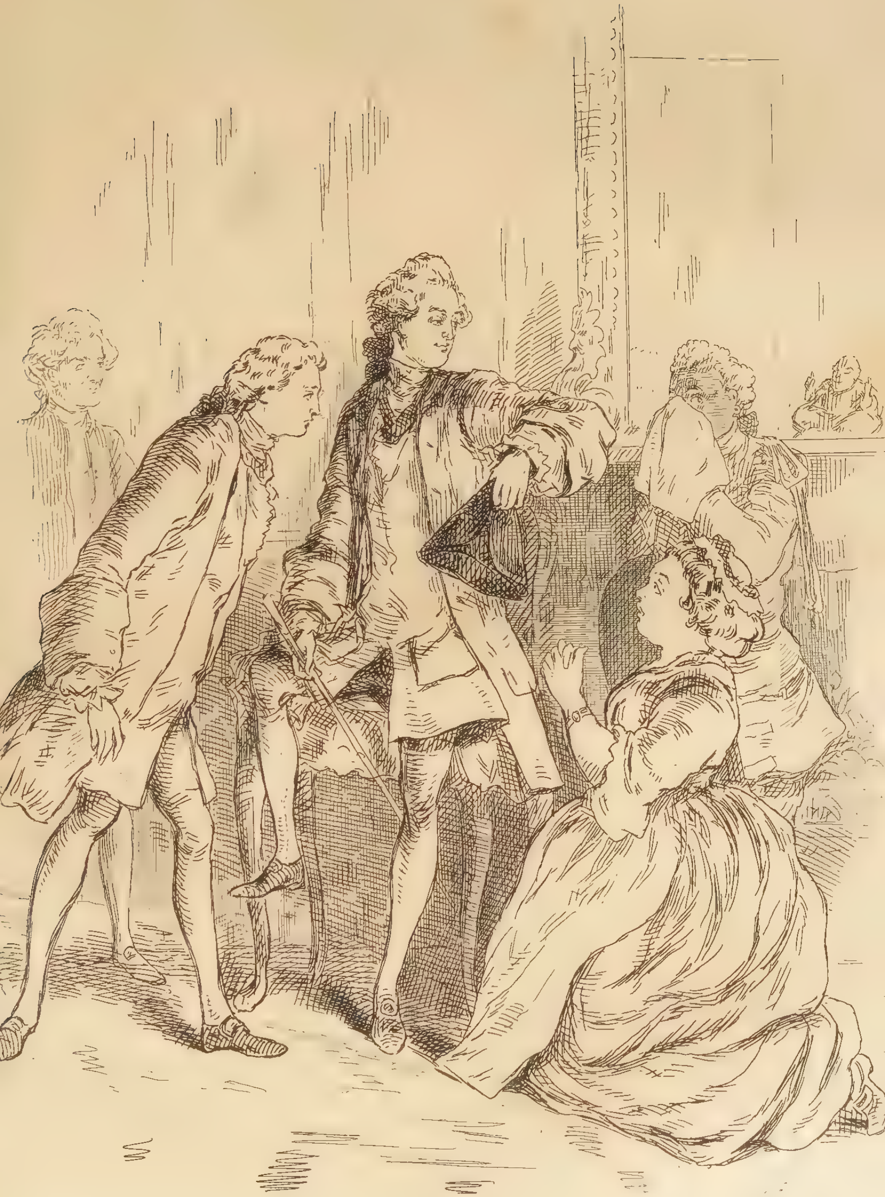
But Betty would not cease weeping, and it was decreed that Lord March was to cease winning for that night. Mr. Warrington rose from his seat, and made for the bell, saying:

"My dear lord, the game must be over for to-night. My relative writes to me in great distress, and I am bound to go to her."

"Curse her! Why couldn't she wait till to-morrow?" cries my lord, testily.

Mr. Warrington ordered a post-chaise instantly. His own horses would take him to Bromley.

"Bet you, you don't do it within the hour! bet you, you don't do it within five quarters of an hour! bet you four to one—or I'll take your bet, which you please—that you're not robbed on Blackheath! Bet you, you are not at Tunbridge Wells before midnight!" cries Lord March.



BAD NEWS FROM TUNBRIDGE

"Done!" says Mr. Warrington. And my lord carefully notes down the terms of the three wagers in his pocket-book.

Lady Maria's letter ran as follows:—

"MY DEAR COUSIN,—I am fell into a *trapp*, w^{ch} I perceive the machinations of *villians*. I am a *prisner*. Betty will tell you *all*. Ah, my Henrico! come to the resQ of your

"MOLLY."

In half-an-hour after the receipt of this missive, Mr. Warrington was in his post-chaise and galloping over Westminster Bridge on the road to succour his kinswoman.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

SAMPSON AND THE PHILISTINES.

MY happy chance in early life led me to become intimate with a respectable person who was born in a certain island, which is pronounced to be the first gem of the ocean by, no doubt, impartial judges of maritime jewellery. The stories which that person imparted to me regarding his relatives who inhabited the gem above mentioned, were such as used to make my young blood curdle with horror to think there should be so much wickedness in the world. Every crime which you can think of; the entire Ten Commandments broken in a general smash: such rogueries and knaveries as no story-teller could invent; such murders and robberies as Thurtell or Turpin scarce ever perpetrated;—were by my informant accurately remembered, and freely related, respecting his nearest kindred to any one who chose to hear him. It was a wonder how any of the family still lived out of the hulks. "Me brother Tim had brought his fawther's gree hairs with sorrow to the greeve: me brother Mick had robbed the par'sh church repaytedly: me sisther Annamaroia had jilted the Captain and ran off with the Ensign, forged her grandmother's will, and stole the spoons, which Larry the knife-boy was hanged for."

The family of Atreus was as nothing compared to the race of O'What-d'ye-call'em, from which my friend sprung; but no power on earth would, of course, induce me to name the country whence he came.

How great then used to be my *naïf* astonishment to find these murderers, rogues, parricides, habitual forgers of bills of exchange, and so forth, every now and then writing to each other as "my dearest brother," "my dearest sister," and for months at a time living on the most amicable terms! With hands reeking with the blood of his murdered parents, Tim would mix a screeching tumbler, and give Maria a glass from it. With lips black with the perjuries he had sworn in Court respecting his grandmother's abstracted testament, or the murder of his poor brother Thady's helpless orphans, Mick would kiss his sister Julia's bonny cheek, and they would have a jolly night, and cry as they talked about old times, and the dear old Castle What-d'ye-call'em, where they were born, and the fighting Onetyoneth being quarthered there, and the Major proposing for Cyaroloine, and the tomb of their scented mother (who had chayted them out of the propertee), heaven bless her soul! They used to weep and kiss so profusely at meeting and parting, that it was touching to behold them. At the sight of their embraces one forgot those painful little stories, and those repeated previous assurances that, did they tell all, they could hang each other all round.

What can there be finer than forgiveness? What more rational than, after calling a man by every bad name under the sun, to apologize, regret hasty expressions, and so forth, withdraw the decanter (say) which you have flung at your enemy's head, and be friends as before? Some folks possess this admirable, this angel-like gift of forgiveness. It was beautiful, for instance, to see our two ladies at Tunbridge Wells forgiving one another, smiling, joking, fondling almost in spite of the hard words of yesterday—yes, and forgetting bygones, though they couldn't help remembering them perfectly well. I wonder, can you and I do as much? Let us strive, my friend, to acquire this pacable, Christian spirit. My belief is that you may learn to forgive bad language employed to you; but, then, you must have a deal of practice, and be accustomed to hear and use it. You embrace after a quarrel and mutual bad language. Heaven bless us! Bad words are nothing when one is accustomed to them, and scarce need ruffle the temper on either side.

So the aunt and niece played cards very amicably together, and drank to each other's health, and each took a wing of the chicken, and pulled a bone of the merry-thought, and (in conversation) scratched their neighbours', not each other's, eyes out. Thus we have read how the Peninsular warriors, when the bugles sang truce, fraternised and exchanged tobacco-pouches and wine, ready to seize their firelocks and knock each other's heads off when the truce was over; and thus our old soldiers, skilful in war, but knowing the charms of a quiet life, laid their weapons down for the nonce, and hob-and-nobbed gaily together. Of course, whilst drinking with Jack Frenchman, you have your piece handy to blow his brains out if he makes a hostile move; but, meanwhile, it is *à votre santé, mon camarade!* Here's to you, Mounseer! and everything is as pleasant as possible. Regarding Aunt Bernstein's threatened gout? The twinges had gone off. Maria was so glad! Maria's fainting fits? She had no return of them. A slight recurrence last night. The Baroness was so sorry! Her niece must see the best doctor, take everything to fortify her, continue to take the steel, even after she left Tunbridge. How kind of Aunt Bernstein to offer to send some of the bottled waters after her! Suppose Madame Bernstein says in confidence to her own woman, "Fainting fits!—pooh!—epilepsy! inherited from that horrible scrofulous German mother!" What means have we of knowing the private conversation of the old lady and her attendant? Suppose Lady Maria orders Mrs. Betty, her ladyship's maid, to taste every glass of medicinal water, first declaring that her aunt is capable of poisoning her? Very likely such conversations take place. These are but precautions—these are the firelocks which our old soldiers have at their sides, loaded and cocked, but at present lying quiet on the grass.

Having Harry's bond in her pocket, the veteran Maria did not choose to press for payment. She knew the world too well for that. He was bound to her, but she gave him plenty of day-rule, and leave of absence on parole. It was not her object needlessly to chafe and anger her young slave. She knew the difference of ages, and that Harry must have his pleasures and diversions. "Take your ease and amusement, cousin," says Lady Maria. "Frisk about, pretty little mousekin," says grey Grimalkin, purring in the corner, and keeping watch with her green eyes. About all that Harry was to see and do on his first visit to London, his female relatives had of course talked and joked. Both of the ladies knew perfectly what were a young gentleman's ordinary amusements in those days, and spoke of them with the frankness which characterized those easy times.

Our wily Calypso consoled herself, then, perfectly, in the absence of her young wanderer, and took any diversion which came to hand. Mr. Jack Morris, the gentleman whom we have mentioned as rejoicing in the company of Lord March and Mr. Warrington, was one of these diversions. To live with titled personages was the delight of Jack Morris's life; and to lose money at cards to an earl's daughter was almost a pleasure to him. Now, the Lady Maria Esmond was an earl's daughter, who was very glad to win money. She obtained permission to take Mr. Morris to the Countess of Yarmouth's assembly, and played cards with him—and so everybody was pleased.

Thus the first eight-and-forty hours after Mr. Warrington's departure passed pretty cheerily at Tunbridge Wells, and Friday arrived, when the sermon was to be delivered which we have seen Mr. Sampson preparing. The company at the Wells were ready enough to listen to it. Sampson had a reputation for being a most amusing and eloquent preacher; and if there were no breakfast, conjuror, dancing bears, concert going on, the good Wells folk would put up with a sermon. He knew Lady Yarmouth was coming, and what a power she had in the giving of livings and the dispensing of bishoprics, the Defender of the Faith of that day having a remarkable confidence in her ladyship's opinion upon these matters;—and so we may be sure that Mr. Sampson prepared his very best discourse for her hearing. When the Great Man is at home at the Castle, and walks over to the little country church in the park, bringing the Duke, the Marquis, and a couple of Cabinet Ministers with him, has it ever been your lot to sit among the congregation, and watch Mr. Trotter the curate and his sermon? He looks anxiously at the Great Pew; he falters as he gives out his text, and thinks, "Ah, perhaps his lordship may give me a living!" Mrs. Trotter and the girls look anxiously at the Great Pew too, and watch the effects of papa's discourse—the well-known favourite discourse—upon the big-wigs assembled. Papa's first nervousness is over: his noble voice clears, warms to his sermon: he kindles: he takes his pocket-handkerchief out: he is coming to that exquisite passage which has made them all cry at the parsonage: he has begun it! Ah! What is that humming noise, which fills the edifice, and causes hob-nailed Melibœus to grin at smock-frocked Tityrus? It is the Right Honourable Lord Naseby, snoring in the pew by the fire! And poor Trotter's visionary mitre disappears with the music.

Sampson was the domestic chaplain of Madame Bernstein's nephew. The two ladies of the Esmond family patronized the preacher. On the day of the sermon, the Baroness had a little breakfast in his honour, at which Sampson made his appearance, rosy and handsome, with a fresh-flowered wig, and a smart, rustling new cassock, which he had on credit from some church-admiring mercer at the Wells. By the side of his patronesses, their ladyships' lacqueys walking behind them with their great gilt prayer-books, Mr. Sampson marched from breakfast to church. Every one remarked how well the Baroness Bernstein looked; she laughed, and was particularly friendly with her niece; she had a bow and a stately smile for all, as she moved on, with her tortoiseshell cane. At the door there was a dazzling conflux of rank and fashion—all the fine company of the Wells trooping in; and her ladyship of Yarmouth, conspicuous with vermilion cheeks, and a robe of flame-coloured taffeta. There were shabby people present, besides the fine company, though these latter were by far the most numerous. What an odd-looking pair, for instance, were those in ragged coats, one of them with his carroty hair appearing under his scratch-wig, and who entered the church just as the organ stopped! Nay, he could not have been a Protestant, for he mechanically crossed himself as he entered the place, saying to his comrade, "Bedad, Tim, I forgawt!" by which I conclude that the individual came from an island which has been mentioned at the commencement of this chapter. Wherever they go, a rich fragrance of whisky spreads itself. A man may be a heretic, but possess genius: these Catholic gentlemen have come to pay homage to Mr. Sampson.

Nay, there are not only members of the old religion present, but disciples of a creed still older. Who are those two individuals with hooked noses and sallow countenances who worked into the church, in spite of some little opposition on the part of the beadle? Seeing the greasy appearance of these Hebrew strangers, Mr. Beadle was for denying them admission. But one whispered into his ear, "We wants to be conwerted, gov'nor!" another slips money into his hand,—Mr. Beadle lifts up the mace with which he was barring the doorway, and the Hebrew gentlemen enter. There goes the organ! the doors have closed. Shall we go in, and listen to Mr. Sampson's sermon, or lie on the grass without?

Preceded by that beadle in gold lace, Sampson walked up to the pulpit, as rosy and jolly a man as you could wish to see. Presently, when he surged up out of his plump pulpit cushion, why did his Reverence turn as pale as death? He looked to the western church-door—there, on each side of it, were those horrible Hebrew Caryatides. He then looked to the vestry-door, which was hard by the rector's pew, in which Sampson had been sitting during the service, alongside of their ladyships his patronesses. Suddenly, a couple of perfumed Hibernian gentlemen slipped out of an adjacent seat, and placed themselves on a bench close by that vestry-door and rector's pew, and so sat till the conclusion of the sermon, with eyes meekly cast down to the ground. How can we describe that sermon, if the preacher himself never knew how it came to an end?

Nevertheless, it was considered an excellent sermon. When it was over, the fine ladies buzzed into one another's ears over their pews, and uttered their praise and comments. Madame Walmoden, who was in the next pew to our friends, said it was bewdiful, and made her dremble all over. Madame Bernstein said it was excellent. Lady Maria was pleased to think that the family chaplain should so distinguish himself. She looked up at him, and strove to catch his Reverence's eye, as he still sat in his pulpit; she greeted him with a little wave of the hand and flutter of her handkerchief. He scarcely seemed to note the compliment; his face was pale, his eyes were looking yonder, towards the font, where those Hebrews still remained. The stream of people passed by them—in a rush, when they were lost to sight,—in a throng—in a march of twos and threes—in a dribble of one at a time. Everybody was gone. The two Hebrews were still there by the door.

The Baroness de Bernstein and her niece still lingered in the rector's pew, where the old lady was deep in conversation with that gentleman.

"Who are those horrible men at the door? and what a smell of spirits there is," cries Lady Maria to Mrs. Brett, her aunt's woman, who had attended the two ladies.

"Farewell, doctor; you have a darling little boy: is he to be a clergyman, too?" asks Madame de Bernstein. "Are you ready, my dear?" And the pew is thrown open, and Madame Bernstein, whose father was only a viscount, insists that her niece, Lady Maria, who was an earl's daughter, should go first out of the pew.

As she steps foward, those individuals whom her ladyship designated as two horrible men, advance. One of them pulls a long strip of paper out of his pocket, and her ladyship starts and turns pale. She makes for the vestry, in a vague hope that she can clear the door and close it behind her. The two whiskyfied gentlemen are up with her, however; one of them actually lays his hand on her shoulder, and says:—

"At the shuit of Misthress Pincott of Kinsington, mercer, I have the honour of arresting your leedyship. Me neem is Costigan, Madam, a poor gentleman of Oireland, binding to circumstances, and forced to follow a disagrayable profession. Will your leedyship walk, or shall me man go fetch a cheer?"

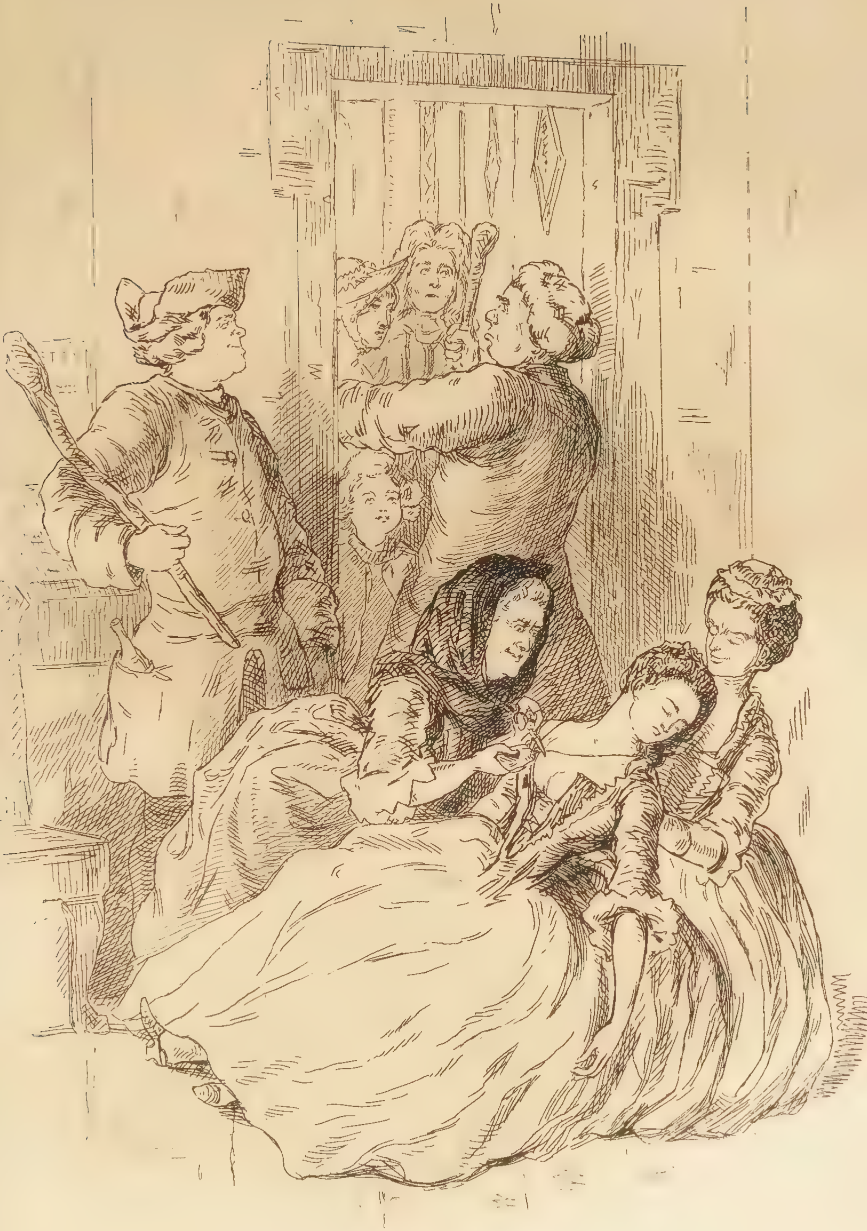
For reply Lady Maria Esmond gives three shrieks, and falls swooning to the ground. "Keep the door, Mick!" shouts Mr. Costigan. "Best let in no one else, Madam," he says, very politely, to Madame de Bernstein. "Her ladyship has fallen in a feenting fit, and will recover here, at her aise."

"Unlace her, Brett!" cries the old lady, whose eyes twinkle oddly; and, as soon as that operation is performed, Madame Bernstein seizes a little bag suspended by a hair chain, which Lady Maria wears round her neck, and snips the necklace in twain. "Dash some cold water over her face, it always recovers her!" says the Baroness. "You stay with her, Brett. How much is your suit, gentlemen?"

Mr. Costigan says, "The cleem we have against her leedyship is for one hundred and thirty-two pounds, in which she is indebted to Misthress Eliza Pincott."

Meanwhile, where is the Reverend Mr. Sampson? Like the fabled opossum we have read of, who, when he spied the unerring gunner from his gum-tree, said: "It's no use, major, I will come down," so Sampson gave himself up to his pursuers. "At whose suit, Simons?" he sadly asked. Sampson knew Simons: they had met many a time before.

"Buckleby Cordwainer," says Mr. Simons.



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"Forty-eight pound and charges, I know," says Mr. Sampson, with a sigh. "I haven't got the money. What officer is there here?" Mr. Simons's companion, Mr. Lyons, here stepped forward, and said his house was most convenient, and often used by gentlemen, and he should be most happy and proud to accommodate his Reverence.

Two chairs happened to be in waiting outside the chapel. In those two chairs my Lady Maria Esmond and Mr. Sampson placed themselves, and went to Mr. Lyons's residence, escorted by the gentlemen to whom we have just been introduced.

Very soon after the capture the Baroness Bernstein sent Mr. Case, her confidential servant, with a note to her niece, full of expressions of the most ardent affection: but regretting that her heavy losses at cards rendered the payment of such a sum as that in which Lady Maria stood indebted quite impossible. She had written off to Mrs. Pincott *by that very post*, however, to entreat her to grant time, and as soon *as ever she had an answer*, would not fail to acquaint her dear unhappy niece.

Mrs. Betty came over to console her mistress: and the two poor women cast about for money enough to provide a horse and chaise for Mrs. Betty, who had very nearly come to misfortune, too. Both my Lady Maria and her maid had been unlucky at cards, and could not muster more than eighteen shillings between them: so it was agreed that Betty should sell a gold chain belonging to her lady, and with the money travel to London. Now Betty took the chain to the very toy-shop man who had sold it to Mr. Warrington, who had given it to his cousin: and the toy-shop man, supposing that she had stolen the chain, was for bringing in a constable to Betty. Hence, she had to make explanations, and to say how her mistress was in durance; and, ere the night closed, all Tunbridge Wells knew that my Lady Maria Esmond was in the hands of bailiffs. Meanwhile, however, the money was found, and Mrs. Betty whisked up to London in search of the champion in whom the poor prisoner confided.

"Don't say anything about that paper being gone! Oh, the wretch, the wretch! She shall pay it me!" I presume that Lady Maria meant her aunt by the word "wretch." Mr. Sampson read a sermon to her ladyship, and they passed the evening over revenge and backgammon, with well-grounded hopes that Harry Warrington would rush to their rescue as soon as ever he heard of their mishap.

Though, ere the evening was over, every soul at the Wells knew what had happened to Lady Maria, and a great deal more; though they knew she was taken in execution, the house where she lay, the amount—nay, ten times the amount—for which she was captured, and that she was obliged to pawn her trinkets to get a little money to keep her in jail; though everybody said that old fiend of a Bernstein was at the bottom of the business, of course they were all civil and bland in society; and, at my Lady Trumpington's cards that night, where Madame Bernstein appeared, and as long as she was within hearing, not a word was said regarding the morning's transactions. Lady Yarmouth asked the Baroness news of her breddy nephew, and heard Mr. Warrington was in London. My Lady Maria was not coming to Lady Trumpington's that evening? My Lady Maria was indisposed, had fainted at church that morning, and was obliged to keep her room. The cards were dealt, the fiddles sang, the wine went round, the gentlefolks talked, laughed, yawned, chattered, the footmen waylaid the supper, the chairmen drank and swore, the stars climbed the sky, just as though no Lady Maria was imprisoned, and no poor Sampson arrested.

Perhaps Madame de Bernstein stayed at the assembly until the very last, not willing to allow the company the chance of speaking of her as soon as her back should be turned. Ah, what a comfort it is, I say again, that we have backs, and that our ears don't grow on them! He that has ears to hear, let him stuff them with cotton. Madame Bernstein might have heard folks say it was heartless of her to come abroad, and play at cards, and make merry when her niece was in trouble. As if she could help Maria by staying at home, indeed! At her age, it is dangerous to disturb an old lady's tranquillity. "Don't tell me!" says Lady Yarmouth. "The Bernstein would play at carts over her niece's coffin. Talk about her heart! who ever said she had one? The old spy lost it to the Chevalier a tousand years ago, and has lived ever since perfectly well without one. For how much is the Maria put in prison? If it were only a small sum, we would pay it, it would vex her aunt so. Find out, Fuchs, in the morning, for how much Lady Maria Esmond is put in prison." And the faithful Fuchs bowed, and promised to do her Excellency's will.

Meanwhile, about midnight, Madame de Bernstein went home, and presently fell into a sound sleep, from which she did not wake up until a late hour of the morning, when she summoned her usual attendant, who arrived with her ladyship's morning dish of tea. If I told you she took a dram with it, you would be shocked. Some of our great-grandmothers used to have cordials in their "closets." Have you not read of the fine lady in Walpole, who said, "If I drink more, I shall be 'muckibus!'?" As surely as Mr. Gough is alive now, our ancestresses were accustomed to partake pretty freely of strong waters.

So, having tipped off the cordial, Madame Bernstein rouses and asks Mrs. Brett the news.

"He can give it you," says the waiting-woman, sulkily.

"He? Who?"

Mrs. Brett names Harry, and says Mr. Warrington arrived about midnight yesterday—and Betty, my Lady Maria's maid, was with him. "And my Lady Maria sends your ladyship her love and duty, and hopes you slept well," says Brett.

"Excellently, poor thing! Is Betty gone to her?"

"No; she is here," says Mrs. Brett.

"Let me see her directly," cries the old lady.

"I'll tell her," replies the obsequious Brett, and goes away upon her mistress's errand, leaving the old lady placidly reposing on her pillows. Presently, two pairs of high-heeled shoes are heard pattering over the deal floor of the bed-chamber. Carpets were luxuries scarcely known in bed-rooms of those days.

"So, Mrs. Betty, you were in London yesterday?" calls Bernstein from her curtains.

"It is not Betty—it is I! Good morning, dear aunt! I hope you slept well?" cries a voice which made old Bernstein start on her pillow. It was the voice of Lady Maria, who drew the curtains aside, and dropped her aunt a low curtsey. Lady Maria looked very pretty, rosy, and happy. And with the little surprise incident at her appearance through Madame Bernstein's curtains, I think we may bring this chapter to a close.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

HARRY TO THE RESCUE.

MY dear Lord March," (wrote Mr. Warrington from Tunbridge Wells, on Saturday morning, the 25th August, 1756): "This is to inform you (with satisfaction) that I have won all our *three betts.* I was at Bromley two minutes within the hour; my new horses kep a-going at a capital rate. I drove them myself, having the postilion by me to show me the way, and my black man inside with Mrs. Betty. Hope they found the drive *very pleasant.* We were not stopped on Blackheath, though two fellows on horseback rode up to us, but not liking the looks of our *countenantses*, rode off again; and we got into Tunbridge Wells (where I transacted my business) at forty-five minutes after eleven. This makes me *quitts* with your lordship after yesterday's picquet, which I shall be very happy to give you your revenge, and am

"Your most obliged, faithful servant,

"H. ESMOND WARRINGTON."

And now, perhaps, the reader will understand by what means Lady Maria Esmond was enabled to surprise her dear aunt in her bed on Saturday morning, and walk out of the house of captivity. Having despatched Mrs. Betty to London, she scarcely expected that her emissary would return on the day of her departure; and she and the Chaplain were playing their cards at midnight, after a small refection which the bailiff's wife had provided for them, when the rapid whirling of wheels was heard approaching their house, and caused the lady to lay her trumps down, and her heart to beat with more than ordinary emotion. Whirr came the wheels—the carriage stopped at the very door: there was a parley at the gate: then appeared Mrs. Betty, with a face radiant with joy, though her eyes were full of tears; and next, who is that tall young gentleman who enters? Can any of my readers guess? Will they be very angry if I say that the Chaplain slapped down his cards with an huzzay, whilst Lady Maria, turning as white as a sheet, rose up from her chair, tottered forward a step or two, and, with an hysterical shriek, flung herself in her cousin's arms? How many kisses did he give her? If they were *mille, deinde centum, dein mille altera, dein secunda centum*, and so on, I am not going to cry out. He had come to rescue her. She knew he would; he was her champion, her preserver from bondage and ignominy. She wept a genuine flood of tears upon his shoulder, and as she reclines there, giving way to a hearty emotion, I protest I think she looks handsomer than she has looked during the whole course of this history. She did not faint this time: she went home, leaning lovingly on her cousin's arm, and may have had one or two hysterical outbreaks in the night; but Madame Bernstein slept soundly, and did not hear her.

"You are both free to go home," were the first words Harry said. "Get my lady's hat and cardinal, Betty, and, Chaplain, we'll smoke a pipe together at our lodgings, it will refresh me after my ride." The Chaplain, who, too, had a great deal of available sensibility, was very much overcome; he burst into tears as he seized Harry's hand, and kissed it, and prayed God to bless his dear generous young patron. Mr. Warrington felt a glow of pleasure thrill through his frame. It is good to be able to help the suffering and the poor; it is good to be able to turn sorrow into joy. Not a little proud and elated was our young champion, as, with his hat cocked, he marched by the side of his rescued princess. His feelings came out to meet him, as it were, and beautiful happinesses with kind eyes and smiles danced before him, and clad him in a robe of honour, and scattered flowers on his path, and blew trumpets and shawms of sweet gratulation, calling, "Here comes the conqueror! Make way for the champion!" And so they led him up to the king's house, and seated him in the hall of complacency, upon the cushions of comfort. And yet it was not much he had done. Only a kindness. He had but to put his hand in his pocket, and with an easy talisman, drive off the dragon which kept the gate, and cause the tyrant to lay down his axe, who had got Lady Maria in execution. Never mind if his vanity is puffed up; he is very good-natured; he has rescued two unfortunate people, and pumped tears of goodwill and happiness out of their eyes:—and if he brags a little to-night, and swaggers somewhat to the Chaplain, and talks about London and Lord March, and White's, and Almack's, with the air of a maccaroni, I don't think we need like him much the less.

Sampson continued to be prodigiously affected. This man had a nature most easily worked upon, and extraordinarily quick to receive pain and pleasure, to tears, gratitude, laughter, hatred, liking. In his preaching profession he had educated and trained his sensibilities so that they were of great use to him; he was for the moment what he acted. He wept quite genuine tears, finding that he could produce them freely. He loved you whilst he was with you; he had a real pang of grief as he mingled his sorrow with the widow or orphan; and, meeting Jack as he came out of the door, went to the tavern opposite, and laughed and roared over the bottle. He gave money very readily, but never repaid when he borrowed. He was on this night in a rapture of gratitude and flattery towards Harry Warrington. In all London, perhaps, the unlucky Fortunate Youth could not have found a more dangerous companion.

To-night Sampson was in his grateful mood, and full of enthusiasm for the benefactor who had released him from durance. With each bumper his admiration grew stronger. He exalted Harry as the best and noblest of men, and the complacent young simpleton, as we have said, was disposed to take these praises as very well deserved. "The younger branch of our family," said Mr. Harry with a superb air, "have treated you scurvily; but, by Jove, Sampson my boy, I'll stand by you!" At a certain period of Burgundian excitement Mr. Warrington was always very eloquent respecting the splendour of his family. "I am very glad I was enabled to help you in your strait. Count on me whenever you want me, Sampson.

Did you not say you had a sister at boarding-school? You will want money for her, sir. Here is a little bill which may help to pay her schooling." And the liberal young fellow passed a bank-note across to the Chaplain.

Again the man was affected to tears. Harry's generosity smote him.

"Mr. Warrington," he said, putting the bank-note a short distance from him, "I—I don't deserve your kindness,—by George, I don't!" and he swore an oath to corroborate his passionate assertion.

"Psha!" says Harry. "I have plenty more of 'em. There was no money in that confounded pocket-book which I lost last week."

"No, sir. There was no money!" says Mr. Sampson, dropping his head.

"Hallo! How do you know, Mr. Chaplain?" asks the young gentleman.

"I know because I am a villain, sir. I am not worthy of your kindness. I told you so. I found the book, sir, that night, when you had too much wine at Barbeau's."

"And read the letters?" asked Mr. Warrington, starting up and turning very red.

"They told me nothing I did not know, sir," said the Chaplain. "You have had spies about you whom you little suspect—from whom you are much too young and simple to be able to keep your secret."

"Are those stories about Lady Fanny, and my Cousin Will and his doings, true then?" inquired Harry.

"Yes, they are true," sighed the Chaplain. "The house of Castlewood has not been fortunate, sir, since your honour's branch, the elder branch, left it."

"Sir, you don't dare for to breathe a word against my Lady Maria?" Harry cried out.

"Oh, not for worlds!" says Mr. Sampson, with a queer look at his young friend. "I may think she is too old for your honour, and that 'tis a pity you should not have a wife better suited to your age, though I admit she looks very young for hers, and hath every virtue and accomplishment."

"She *is* too old, Sampson, I know she is," says Mr. Warrington, with much majesty; "but she has my word, and you see, sir, how fond she is of me. Go bring me the letters, sir, which you found, and let me try and forgive you for having seized upon them."

"My benefactor, let me try and forgive myself!" cries Mr. Sampson, and departed towards his chamber, leaving his young patron alone over his wine.

Sampson returned presently, looking very pale. "What has happened, sir?" says Harry, with an imperious air.

The Chaplain held out a pocket-book. "With your name in it, sir," he said.

"My brother's name in it," says Harry; "it was George who gave it to me."

"I kept it in a locked chest, sir, in which I left it this morning before I was taken by those people. Here is the book, sir, but the letters are gone. My trunk and valise have also been tampered with. And I am a miserable, guilty man, unable to make you the restitution which I owe you." Sampson looked the picture of woe as he uttered these sentiments. He clasped his hands together, and almost knelt before Harry in an attitude the most pathetic.

Who had been in the rooms in Mr. Sampson's and Mr. Warrington's absence? The landlady was ready to go on her knees, and declare that nobody had come in: nor, indeed, was Mr. Warrington's chamber in the least disturbed, nor anything abstracted from Mr. Sampson's scanty wardrobe and possessions, except those papers of which he deplored the absence.

Whose interest was it to seize them? Lady Maria's? The poor woman had been a prisoner all day, and during the time when the capture was effected.

She certainly was guiltless of the rape of the letters. The sudden seizure of the two—Case, the house-steward's secret journey to London,—Case, who knew the shoemaker at whose house Sampson lodged in London, and all the secret affairs of the Esmond family,—these points, considered together and separately, might make Mr. Sampson think that the Baroness Bernstein was at the bottom of this mischief. But why arrest Lady Maria? The Chaplain knew nothing as yet about that letter which her ladyship had lost; for poor Maria had not thought it necessary to confide her secret to him.

As for the pocket-book and its contents, Mr. Harry was so swollen up with self-satisfaction that evening, at winning his three bets, at rescuing his two friends, at the capital cold supper of partridges and ancient Burgundy which obsequious Monsieur Barbeau had sent over to the young gentleman's lodgings, that he accepted Sampson's vows of contrition, and solemn promises of future fidelity, and reached his gracious hand to the Chaplain, and condoned his offence. When the latter swore his great gods, that henceforth he would be Harry's truest, humblest friend and follower, and at any moment would be ready to die for Mr. Warrington, Harry said, majestically, "I think, Sampson, you would; I hope you would. My family—the Esmond family—has always been accustomed to have faithful friends round about 'em—and to reward 'em too. The wine's with you, Chaplain. What toast do you call, sir?"

"I call a blessing on the house of Esmond-Warrington!" cries the Chaplain, with real tears in his eyes.

"We are the elder branch, sir. My grandfather was the Marquis of Esmond," says Mr. Harry, in a voice noble but somewhat indistinct. "Here's to you, Chaplain—and I forgive you, sir—and God bless you, sir—and if you had been took for three times as much, I'd have paid it. Why, what's that I see through the shutters? I am blest if the sun hasn't risen again! We have no need of candles to go to bed, ha, ha!" And once more extending his blessing to his chaplain, the young fellow went off to sleep.

About noon Madame de Bernstein sent over a servant to say that she would be glad if her nephew would come over and drink a dish of chocolate with her: whereupon our young friend rose and walked to his aunt's lodgings. She remarked, not without pleasure, some alteration in his toilette: in his brief sojourn in London he had visited a tailor or two, and had been introduced by my Lord March to some of his lordship's purveyors and tradesmen.

Aunt Bernstein called him "my dearest child," and thanked him for his noble, his generous behaviour to dear Maria. What a shock that seizure in church had been to her! A still greater shock that she had lost three hundred only on the Wednesday night to Lady Yarmouth, and was quite *à sec.* "Why," said the Baroness, "I had to send Case to London to my agent to get me money to pay—I could not leave Tunbridge in her debt."

"So Case did go to London?" says Mr. Harry.

"Of course he did: the Baroness de Bernstein can't afford to say she wants money. Canst thou lend me some, child?"

"I can give your ladyship twenty-two pounds," said Harry, blushing very red: "I have but forty-four left till I get my Virginian remittances. I have bought horses and clothes, and been very extravagant, aunt."

"And rescued your poor relations in distress, you prodigal good boy. No, child, I do not want thy money. I can give thee some. Here is a note upon my agent for fifty pounds, vaurien! Go and spend it, and be merry! I dare say thy mother will repay me, though she does not love me." And she looked quite affectionate, and held out a pretty hand, which the youth kissed.

"Your mother did not love me, but your mother's father did once. Mind, sir, you always come to me when you have need of me."

When bent on exhibiting them nothing could exceed Beatrix Bernstein's grace or good humour. "I can't help loving you, child," she continued, "and yet I am so angry with you that I have scarce the patience to speak to you. So you have actually engaged yourself to poor Maria, who is as old as your mother? What will Madam Esmond say? She may live three hundred years, and you will not have wherewithal to support yourselves."

"I have ten thousand pounds from my father, of my own, now my poor brother is gone," said Harry, "that will go some way."

"Why, the interest will not keep you in card-money."

"We must give up cards," says Harry.

"It is more than Maria is capable of. She will pawn the coat off your back to play. The rage for it runs in all my brother's family—in me too, I own it. I warned you. I prayed you not to play with them, and now a lad of twenty to engage himself to a woman of forty-two!—to write letters on his knees and signed with his heart's blood (which he spells like hartshorn), and say that he will marry no other woman than his adorable cousin, Lady Maria Esmond. Oh! it's cruel—cruel!"

"Great heavens! Madam, who showed you my letter?" asked Harry, burning with a blush again.

"An accident. She fainted when she was taken by those bailiffs. Brett cut her laces for her; and when she was carried off, poor thing, we found a little *sachet* on the floor, which I opened, not knowing in the least what it contained. And in it was Mr. Harry Warrington's precious letter. And here, sir, is the case."

A pang shot through Harry's heart. "Great heavens! why didn't she destroy it?" he thought.

"I—I will give it back to Maria," he said, stretching out his hand for the little locket.

"My dear, I have burned the foolish letter," said the old lady. "If you choose to betray me I must take the consequence. If you choose to write another, I cannot help thee. But, in that case, Harry Esmond, I had rather never see thee again. Will you keep my secret? Will you believe an old woman who loves you and knows the world better than you do? I tell you, if you keep that foolish promise, misery and ruin are surely in store for you. What is a lad like you in the hands of a wily woman of the world, who makes a toy of you? She has entrapped you into a promise, and your old aunt has cut the strings and set you free. Go back again! Betray me if you will, Harry."

"I am not angry with you, aunt—I wish I were," said Mr. Warrington, with very great emotion. "I—I shall not repeat what you told me."

"Maria never will, child—mark my words!" cried the old lady, eagerly. "She will never own that she has lost that paper. She will tell you that she has it."

"But I am sure she—she is very fond of me; you should have seen her last night," faltered Harry.

"Must I tell more stories against my own flesh and blood?" sobs out the Baroness. "Child, you do not know her past life!"

"And I must not, and I will not!" cries Harry, starting up. "Written or said—it does not matter which! But my word is given; they may play with such things in England, but we gentlemen of Virginia don't break 'em. If she holds me to my word, she shall have me. If we are miserable, as, I dare say, we shall be, I'll take a firelock, and go join the King of Prussia, or let a ball put an end to me."

"I—I have no more to say. Will you be pleased to ring that bell? I—I wish you a good morning, Mr. Warrington." And, dropping a very stately curtsey, the old lady rose on her tortoiseshell stick, and turned towards the door. But, as she made her first step, she put her hand to her heart, sank on the sofa again, and shed the first tears that had dropped for long years from Beatrix Esmond's eyes.

Harry was greatly moved, too. He knelt down by her. He seized her cold hand, and kissed it. He told her, in his artless way, how very keenly he had felt her love for him, and how, with all his heart, he returned it. "Ah, aunt!" said he, "you don't know what a villain I feel myself. When you told me, just now, how that paper was burned—oh! I was ashamed to think how glad I was." He bowed his comely head over her hand. She felt hot drops from his eyes raining on it. She had loved this boy. For half a century past—never, perhaps, in the course of her whole worldly life—had she felt a sensation so tender and so pure. The hard heart was wounded now, softened, overcome. She put her two hands on his shoulders, and lightly kissed his forehead.

"You will not tell her what I have done, child?" she said.

He declared "Never! never!" And demure Mrs. Brett, entering at her mistress's summons found the nephew and aunt in this sentimental attitude.

CHAPTER XL.

IN WHICH HARRY PAYS OFF AN OLD DEBT, AND INCURS SOME NEW ONES.

OUR Tunbridge friends were now weary of the Wells, and eager to take their departure. When the autumn should arrive, Bath was Madame de Bernstein's mark. There were more cards, company, life, there. She would reach it after paying a few visits to her country friends. Harry promised, with rather a bad grace, to ride with Lady Maria and the Chaplain to Castlewood. Again they passed by Oakhurst village, and the hospitable house where Harry had been so kindly entertained. Maria made so many keen remarks about the young ladies of Oakhurst, and their setting their caps at Harry, and the mother's evident desire to catch him for one of them, that, somewhat in a pet, Mr. Warrington said he would pass his friends' door, as her ladyship disliked and abused them; and was very haughty and sulky that evening at the inn where they stopped, some few miles further on the road. At supper, my Lady Maria's smiles brought no corresponding good humour to Harry's face; her tears (which her ladyship had at command) did not seem to create the least sympathy from Mr. Warrington; to her querulous remarks he growled a surly reply; and my lady was obliged to go to bed at length without getting a single *tête-à-tête* with her cousin,—that obstinate chaplain, as if by order, persisting in staying in the room. Had Harry given Sampson orders to remain? She departed with a sigh. He bowed her to the door with an obstinate politeness, and consigned her to the care of the landlady and her maid.

What horse was that which galloped out of the inn-yard ten minutes after Lady Maria had gone to her chamber? An hour after her departure from their supper-room, Mrs. Betty came in for her lady's bottle of smelling-salts, and found Parson Sampson smoking a pipe alone. Mr. Warrington was gone to bed—was gone to fetch a walk in the moonlight—how should he know where Mr. Harry was, Sampson answered, in reply to the maid's interrogatories. Mr. Warrington was ready to set forward the next morning, and took his place by the side of Lady Maria's carriage. But his brow was black—the dark spirit was still on him. He hardly spoke to her during the journey. "Great heavens! she must have told him that she stole it!" thought Lady Maria within her own mind.

The fact is that, as they were walking up that steep hill which lies about three miles from Oakhurst, on the Westerham road, Lady Maria Esmond, leaning on her fond youth's arm, and indeed very much in love with him, had warbled into his ear the most sentimental vows, protests, and expressions of affection. As she grew fonder, he grew colder! As she looked up in his face, the sun shone down upon hers, which, fresh and well-preserved as it was, yet showed some of the lines and wrinkles of twoscore years; and poor Harry, with that arm leaning on his, felt it intolerably weighty, and by no means relished his walk up the hill. To think that all his life that drag was to be upon him! It was a dreary look forward; and he cursed the moonlight walk, and the hot evening, and the hot wine which had made him give that silly pledge by which he was fatally bound.

Maria's praises and raptures annoyed Harry beyond measure. The poor thing poured out scraps of the few plays which she knew that had reference to her case, and strove with her utmost power to charm her young companion. She called him, over and over again, her champion, her Enrico, her preserver, and vowed that his Molinda would be ever, ever faithful to him. She clung to him. "Ah, child! have I not thy precious image, thy precious hair, thy precious writing *here?*" she said, looking in his face. "Shall it not go with me to the grave? It would, sir, were I to meet with unkindness from my Enrico!" she sighed out.

Here was a strange story! Madame Bernstein had given him the little silken case—she had burned the hair and the note which the case contained, and Maria had it still on her heart! It was then, at the start which Harry gave, as she was leaning on his arm,—at the sudden movement as if he would drop hers—that Lady Maria felt her first pang of remorse that she had told a fib, or rather, that she was found out in telling a fib, which is a far more cogent reason for repentance. Heaven help us! if some people were to do penance for telling lies, would they ever be out of sackcloth and ashes?

Arrived at Castlewood, Mr. Harry's good humour was not increased. My lord was from home; the ladies also were away; the only member of the family whom Harry found, was Mr. Will, who returned from partridge-shooting just as the chaise and cavalcade reached the gate, and who turned very pale when he saw his cousin, and received a sulky scowl of recognition from the young Virginian.

Nevertheless, he thought to put a good face on the matter, and they met at supper, where, before my Lady Maria, their conversation was at first civil, but not lively. Mr. Will had been to some races? to several. He had been pretty successful in his bets? Mr. Warrington hopes. Pretty well. "And you have brought back my horse sound?" asked Mr. Warrington.

"Your horse? what horse?" asked Mr. Will.

"What horse? my horse!" says Mr. Harry, curtly.

"Protest I don't understand you," says Will.

"The brown horse for which I played you, and which I won of you the night before you rode away upon it," says Mr. Warrington, sternly. "You remember the horse, Mr. Esmond."

"Mr. Warrington, I perfectly well remember playing you for a horse, which my servant handed over to you on the day of your departure."

"The Chaplain was present at our play. Mr. Sampson, will you be umpire between us?" Mr. Warrington said, with much gentleness.

"I am bound to decide that Mr. Warrington played for the brown horse," says Mr. Sampson.

"Well, he got the other one," said sulky Mr. Will, with a grin.

"And sold it for thirty shillings!" said Mr. Warrington, always preserving his calm tone.

Will was waggish. "Thirty shillings? and a devilish good price, too, for the broken-knee'd old rip. Ha, ha!"

"Not a word more. 'Tis only a question about a bet, my dear Lady Maria. Shall I serve you some more chicken?" Nothing could be more studiously courteous and gay than Mr. Warrington was, so long as the lady remained in the room. When she rose to go, Harry followed her to the door, and closed it upon her with the most courtly bow of farewell. He stood at the closed door for a moment, and then he bade the servants retire. When those menials were gone, Mr. Warrington locked the heavy door before them, and pocketed the key.

As it clicked in the lock, Mr. Will, who had been sitting over his punch, looking now and then askance at his cousin, asked with one of the oaths which commonly garnished his conversation, "What the —— Mr. Warrington meant by that?"

"I guess there's going to be a quarrel," said Mr. Warrington, blandly, "and there is no use in having these fellows look on at rows between their betters."

"Who is going to quarrel here, I should like to know?" asked Will, looking very pale, and grasping a knife.

"Mr. Sampson, you were present when I played Mr. Will fifty guineas against his brown horse?"

"Against his horse!" bawls out Mr. Will.

"I am not such a fool as you take me for," says Mr. Warrington, "although I do come from Virginia!" And he repeated his question: "Mr. Sampson, you were here when I played the Honourable William Esmond, Esquire, fifty guineas against his brown horse?"

"I must own it, sir," says the Chaplain, with a deprecatory look towards his lord's brother.

"*I* don't own no such a thing," says Mr. Will, with rather a forced laugh.

"No, sir: because it costs you no more pains to lie than to cheat," said Mr. Warrington, walking up to his cousin. "Hands off, Mr. Chaplain, and see fair play! Because you are no better than a —ha!——"

No better than a what we can't say, and shall never know, for as Harry uttered the exclamation, his dear cousin flung a wine-bottle at Mr. Warrington's head, who bobbed just in time, so that the missile flew across the room, and broke against the wainscot opposite, breaking the face of a pictured ancestor of the Esmond family, and then itself against the wall, whence it spirted a pint of good port-wine over the Chaplain's face and flowered wig. "Great heavens, gentlemen, I pray you to be quiet!" cried the parson, dripping with gore.

But gentlemen are not inclined at some moments to remember the commands of the Church. The bottle having failed, Mr. Esmond seized the large silver-handled knife and drove at his cousin. But Harry caught up the other's right hand with his left, as he had seen the boxers do at Marybone; and delivered a rapid blow upon Mr. Esmond's nose, which sent him reeling up against the oak panels, and I dare say caused him to see ten thousand illuminations. He dropped his knife in his retreat against the wall, which his rapid antagonist kicked under the table.

Now Will, too, had been at Marybone and Hockley-in-the-Hole, and, after a gasp for breath and a glare over his bleeding nose at his enemy, he dashed forward his head as though it had been a battering ram, intending to project it into Mr. Henry Warrington's stomach.

This manœuvre Harry had seen, too, on his visit to Marybone, and amongst the negroes upon the maternal estate, who would meet in combat like two concutient cannon-balls, each harder than the other. But Harry had seen and marked the civilized practice of the white man. He skipped aside, and, saluting his advancing enemy with a tremendous blow on the right ear, felled him, so that he struck his head against the heavy oak table and sank lifeless to the ground.

"Chaplain, you will bear witness that it has been a fair fight!" said Mr. Warrington, still quivering with the excitement of the combat, but striving with all his might to restrain himself and look cool. And he drew the key from his pocket and opened the door in the lobby, behind which three or four servants were gathered. A crash of broken glass, a cry, a shout, an oath or two, had told them that some violent scene was occurring within, and they entered, and behold two victims bedabbled with red—the Chaplain bleeding port-wine, and the Honourable William Esmond, Esquire, stretched in his own gore.

"Mr. Sampson will bear witness that I struck fair, and that Mr. Esmond hit the first blow," said Mr. Warrington. "Undo his neckcloth, somebody—he may be dead; and get a fleam, Gumbo, and bleed him. Stop! He is coming to himself! Lift him up, you, and tell a maid to wash the floor."

Indeed, in a minute Mr. Will did come to himself. First his eyes rolled about, or rather, I am ashamed to say, his eye, one having been closed by Mr. Warrington's first blow. First, then, his eye rolled about; then he gasped and uttered an inarticulate moan or two, then he began to swear and curse very freely and articulately.

"He is getting well," said Mr. Warrington.

"Oh, praise be Mussy!" sighs the sentimental Betty.

"Ask him, Gumbo, whether he would like any more?" said Mr. Warrington, with a stern humour.

"Massa Harry say, Wool you like any maw?" asked obedient Gumbo, bowing over the prostrate gentleman.

"No, curse you, you black devil!" says Mr. Will, hitting up at the black object before him. ("So he nearly cut my tongue in *tu* in my mouf!" Gumbo explained to the pitying Betty.) "No, that is, yes! You infernal Mohock! Why does not somebody kick him out of the place?"

"Because nobody dares, Mr. Esmond," says Mr. Warrington, with great state, arranging his ruffles—his ruffled ruffles.

"And nobody won't neither," growled the men. They had all grown to love Harry, whereas Mr. Will had nobody's good word. "We know all's fair, sir. It ain't the first time Master William have been served so."

"And I hope it won't be the last," cries shrill Betty. "To go for to strike a poor black gentleman so!"

Mr. Will had gathered himself up by this time, had wiped his bleeding face with a napkin, and was skulking off to bed.

"Surely it's manners to say good-night to the company. Good-night, Mr. Esmond," says Mr. Warrington, whose jokes, though few, were not very brilliant; but the honest lad relished the brilliant sally, and laughed at it inwardly.

"He's 'ad his zopper, and he goos to baid!" says Betty, in her native dialect, at which everybody laughed outright, except

Mr. William, who went away leaving a black fume of curses, as it were, rolling out of that funnel, his mouth.

It must be owned that Mr. Warrington continued to be witty the next morning. He sent a note to Mr. Will begging to know whether he was for a ride to *town* or *anywheres else.* If he was for London, that he would friten the highwaymen on Hounslow Heath, and look a very *genteel figar at the Chocolate House.* Which letter, I fear, Mr. Will received with his usual violence, requesting the writer to go to some place—not Hounslow.

And besides the parley between Will and Harry, there comes a maiden simpering to Mr. Warrington's door, and Gumbo advances, holding something white and triangular in his ebon fingers.

Harry knew what it was well enough. "Of course it's a letter," groans he. Molinda greets her Enrico, &c. &c. &c. No sleep has she known that night, and so forth, and so forth, and so forth. Has Enrico slept well in the halls of his fathers? *und so weiter, und so weiter.* He must never never *quaril* and be *so cruel again.* *Kai ta loipa.* And I protest I shan't quote any more of this letter. Ah, tablets, golden once,—are ye now faded leaves? Where is the juggler who transmuted you, and why is the glamour over?

After the little scandal with Cousin Will, Harry's dignity would not allow him to stay longer at Castlewood: he wrote a majestic letter to the lord of the mansion, explaining the circumstances which had occurred, and, as he called in Parson Sampson to supervise the document, no doubt it contained none of those eccentricities in spelling which figured in his ordinary correspondence at this period. He represented to poor Maria, that after blackening the eye and damaging the nose of a son of the house, he should remain in it with a very bad grace; and she was forced to acquiesce in the opinion that, for the present, his absence would best become him. Of course, she wept plentiful tears at parting with him. He would go to London, and see younger beauties: he would find none, none who would love him like his fond Maria. I fear Mr. Warrington did not exhibit any profound emotion on leaving her: nay, he cheered up immediately after he crossed Castlewood Bridge, and made his horses whisk over the road at ten miles an hour: he sang to them to go along: he nodded to the pretty girls by the roadside: he chucked my landlady under the chin: he certainly was not inconsolable. Truth is, he longed to be back in London again, to make a figure at St. James's, at Newmarket, wherever the men of fashion congregated. All that petty Tunbridge society of women and card-playing seemed child's-play to him now he had tasted the delight of London life.

By the time he reached London again, almost all the four-and-forty pounds which we have seen that he possessed at Tunbridge had slipped out of his pocket, and farther supplies were necessary. Regarding these he made himself presently easy. There were the two sums of 5,000*l.* in his own and his brother's name, of which he was the master. He would take up a little money, and with a run or two of good luck at play he could easily replace it. Meantime he must live in a manner becoming his station, and it must be explained to Madam Esmond that a gentleman of his rank cannot keep fitting company, and appear as becomes him in society, upon a miserable pittance of two hundred a year.

Mr. Warrington sojourned at the "Bedford Coffee-House" as before, but only for a short while. He sought out proper lodgings at the Court end of the town, and fixed on some apartments in Bond Street, where he and Gumbo installed themselves, his horses standing at a neighbouring livery-stable. And now tailors, mercers, and shoemakers were put in requisition. Not without a pang of remorse, he laid aside his mourning and figured in a laced hat and waistcoat. Gumbo was always dexterous in the art of dressing hair, and with a little powder flung into his fair locks Mr. Warrington's head was as modish as that of any gentleman in the Mall. He figured in the Ring in his phaeton. Reports of his great wealth had long since preceded him to London, and not a little curiosity was excited about the fortunate Virginian.

Until our young friend could be balloted for at the proper season, my Lord March has written down his name for the club at "White's Chocolate House," as a distinguished gentleman from America. There were as yet but few persons of fashion in London, but with a pocketful of money at one-and-twenty, a young fellow can make himself happy even out of the season; and Mr. Harry was determined to enjoy.

He ordered Mr. Draper, then, to sell five hundred pounds of his stock. What would his poor mother have said had she known that the young spendthrift was already beginning to dissipate his patrimony? He dined at the tavern, he supped at the club, where Jack

Morris introduced him, with immense eulogiums, to such gentlemen as were in town. Life and youth and pleasure were before him, the wine was set a-running, and the eager lad was greedy to drink. Do you see, far away in the west yonder, the pious widow at her prayers for her son? Behind the trees at Oakhurst a tender little heart, too, is beating for him, perhaps. When the Prodigal Son was away carousing, were not love and forgiveness still on the watch for him?

Amongst the inedited letters of the late Lord Orford, there is one which the present learned editor, Mr. Peter Cunningham, has omitted from his collection, doubting possibly the authenticity of the document. Nay, I myself have only seen a copy of it in the Warrington papers in Madam Esmond's prim handwriting, and noted "*Mr. H. Walpole's account of my son Henry at London, and of Baroness Tusher,—wrote to Gen^{l} Conway.*"

"*Arlington Street. Friday Night.*

"I have come away, child, for a day or two from my devotions to our Lady of Strawberry. Have I not been on my knees to her these three weeks, and aren't the poor old joints full of rheumatism? A fit took me that I would pay London a visit, that I would go to Vauxhall and Ranelagh. *Quoi!* May I not have my rattle as well as other elderly babies? Suppose, after being so long virtuous, I take a fancy to cakes and ale, shall your reverence say nay to me? George Selwyn and Tony Storer and your humble servant took boat at Westminster t'other night. Was it Tuesday?—no, Tuesday I was with their Graces of Norfolk, who are just from Tunbridge—it was Wednesday. How should I know? Wasn't I dead drunk with a whole pint of lemonade I took at White's?

"The Norfolk folk had been entertaining me on Tuesday with the account of a young savage Iroquois, Choctaw, or Virginian, who has lately been making a little noise in our quarter of the globe. He is an offshoot of that disreputable family of Esmond-Castlewood, of whom all the men are gamblers and spendthrifts, and all the women—well, I shan't say the word, lest Lady Ailesbury should be looking over your shoulder. Both the late lords, my father told me, were in his pay, and the last one, a beau of Queen Anne's reign, from a viscount advanced to be an earl through the merits and intercession of his notorious old sister Bernstein, late Tusher, *née* Esmond—a great beauty, too, of her day, a favourite of the old Pretender. She sold his secrets to my papa, who paid her for them; and being nowise particular in her love for the Stuarts, came over to the august Hanoverian house at present reigning over us. 'Will Horace Walpole's tongue never stop scandal?' says your wife over your shoulder. I kiss your ladyship's hand. I am dumb. The Bernstein is a model of virtue. She had no good reasons for marrying her father's chaplain. Many of the nobility omit the marriage altogether. She *wasn't* ashamed of being Mrs. Tusher, and didn't take a German

Baroncino for a second husband, whom nobody out of Hanover ever saw. The Yarmouth bears no malice. Esther and Vashti are very good friends, and have been cheating each other at Tunbridge at cards all the summer.

"'And what has all this to do with the Iroquois?' says your ladyship. The Iroquois has been at Tunbridge, too—not cheating, perhaps, but winning vastly. They say he has bled Lord March of thousands—Lord March, by whom so much blood hath been shed, that he has quarrelled with everybody, fought with everybody, rode over everybody, been fallen in love with by everybody's wife except Mr. Conway's, and *not* excepting her present Majesty, the Countess of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, Queen of Walmoden and Yarmouth, whom heaven preserve to us.

"You know an offensive little creature *de par le monde*, one Jack Morris, who skips in and out of all the houses of London. When we were at Vauxhall, Mr. Jack gave us a nod under the shoulder of a pretty young fellow enough, on whose arm he was leaning, and who appeared hugely delighted with the enchantments of the garden. Lord, how he stared at the fireworks! Gods, how he huzzayed at the singing of a horrible painted wench who shrieked the ears off my head! A twopenny string of glass beads and a strip of tawdry cloth are treasure in Iroquois-land, and our savage valued them accordingly.

"A buzz went about the place that this was the fortunate youth. He won three hundred at White's last night very genteelly from Rockingham and my precious nephew, and here he was bellowing and huzzaying over the music so as to do you good to hear. I do not love a puppet-show, but I love to treat children to one, Miss Conway! I present your ladyship my compliments, and hope we shall go and see the dolls together.

"When the singing-woman came down from her throne, Jack Morris must introduce my Virginian to her. I saw him blush up to the eyes, and make her, upon my word, a very fine bow, such as I had no idea was practised in wigwams. 'There is a certain *jenny squaw* about her, and that's why the savage likes her,' George said—a joke certainly not as brilliant as a firework. After which it seemed to me that the savage and the savagess retired together.

"Having had a great deal too much to eat and drink three hours before, my partners must have chicken and rack-punch at Vauxhall, where George fell asleep straightway, and for my sins I must tell Tony Storer what I knew about this Virginian's amiable family, especially some of the Bernstein's antecedents, and the history of another elderly beauty of the family, a certain Lady Maria, who was *au mieux* with the late Prince of Wales. What did I say? I protest not half of what I knew, and of course not a tenth part of what I was going to tell, for who should start out upon us but my savage, this time quite red in the face; and in his *war-paint*. The wretch had been drinking fire-water in the next box!

"He cocked his hat, clapped his hand to his sword, asked which of the gentlemen was it that was maligning his family? so that I was obliged to entreat him not to make such a noise, lest he should wake my friend Mr. George Selwyn. And I added, 'I assure you, sir, I had no idea that you were near me, and I most sincerely apologise for giving you pain.'

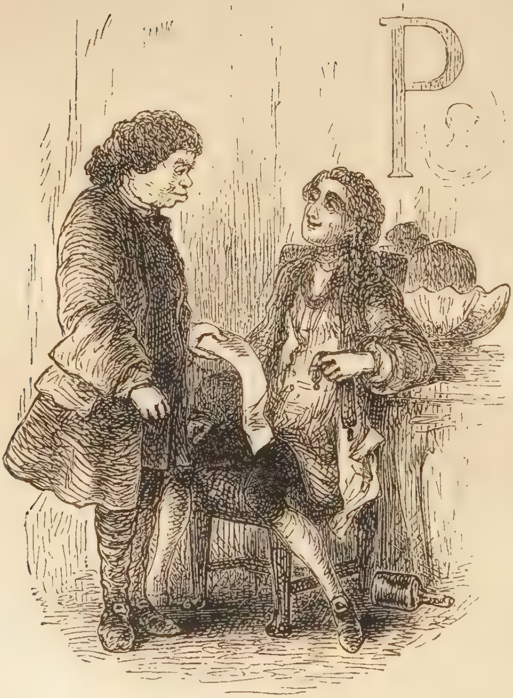
"The Huron took his hand off his tomahawk at this pacific rejoinder, made a bow not ungraciously, said he could not, of course, ask more than an apology from a gentleman of my age (*Merci, Monsieur!*), and, hearing the name of Mr. Selwyn, made another bow to George, and said he had a letter to him from Lord March, which he had had the ill-fortune to mislay. George has put him up for the club, it appears, in conjunction with March, and no doubt these three lambs will fleece each other. Meanwhile, my pacified savage sat down with us, and *buried the hatchet* in another bowl of punch, for which these gentlemen must call. Heaven help us! 'Tis eleven o'clock, and here comes Bedson with my gruel!

"H. W."

"To the Honble. H. S. Conway."

CHAPTER XLI.

RAKE'S PROGRESS.



PEOPLE were still very busy in Harry Warrington's time (not that our young gentleman took much heed of the controversy) in determining the relative literary merits of the ancients and the moderns; and the learned, and the world with them, indeed, pretty generally pronounced in favour of the former. The moderns of that day are the ancients of ours, and we speculate upon them in the present year of grace, as our grandchildren, a hundred years hence, will give their judgment about us. As for your book-learning, O respectable ancestors (though, to be sure, you have the mighty Gibbon with you), I think you will own that you are beaten, and could point to a couple of professors at Cambridge and Glasgow who know more Greek than was to be had in your time in all the universities of Europe, including that of Athens, if such an one existed. As for science, you were scarce more advanced than those heathen to whom in literature you owned yourselves inferior.

And in public and private morality? Which is the better, this actual year 1858, or its predecessor a century back? Gentlemen of Mr. Disraeli's House of Commons! has every one of you his price, as in Walpole's or Newcastle's time,—or (and that is the delicate question) have you almost all of you had it? Ladies, I do not say that you are a society of Vestals—but the chronicle of a hundred years since contains such an amount of scandal, that you may be thankful you did not live in such dangerous times. No: on my conscience I believe that men and women are both better; not only that the Susannahs are more numerous, but that the Elders are not nearly so wicked. Did you ever hear of such books as "Clarissa," "Tom Jones," "Roderick Random;" paintings by contemporary artists, of the men and women, the life and society, of their day? Suppose we were to describe the doings of such a person as Mr. Lovelace, or my Lady Bellaston, or that wonderful "Lady of Quality" who lent her memoirs to the author of "Peregrine Pickle." How the pure and outraged Nineteenth Century would blush, scream, run out of the room, call away the young ladies, and order Mr. Mudie never to send one of that odious author's books again! You are fifty-eight years old, Madam, and it may be that you are too squeamish, that you cry out before you are hurt, and when nobody had any intention of offending your ladyship. Also, it may be that the novelist's art is injured by the restraints put upon him, as many an honest, harmless statue at St. Peter's and the Vatican is spoiled by the tin draperies in which ecclesiastical old women have swaddled the fair limbs of the marble. But in your prudery there is reason. So there is in the state censorship of the Press. The page may contain matter dangerous to *bonos mores*. Out with your scissors, censor, and clip off the prurient paragraph! We have nothing for it but to submit. Society, the despot, has given his imperial decree. We may think the statue had been seen to greater advantage without the tin drapery; we may plead that the moral were better might we recite the whole fable. Away with him—not a word! I never saw the pianofortes in the United States with the frilled muslin trousers on their legs; but, depend on it, the muslin covered some of the notes as well as the mahogany, muffled the music, and stopped the player.

To what does this prelude introduce us? I am thinking of Harry Warrington, Esquire, in his lodgings in Bond Street, London, and of the life which he and many of the young bucks of fashion led in those times, and how I can no more take my fair young reader into them, than Lady Squeams can take her daughter to Cremorne Gardens on an ordinary evening. My dear Miss Diana (Psha! I know you are eight-and-thirty, although you are so wonderfully shy, and want to make us believe you have just left off school-room dinners and a pinafore), when your grandfather was a young man about town, and a member of one of the Clubs at White's, and dined at Pontac's off the feasts provided by Braund and Lebeck, and rode to Newmarket with March and Rockingham, and toasted the best in England with Gilly Williams and George Selwyn (and *didn't* understand George's jokes, of which, indeed, the flavour has very much evaporated since the bottling)—the old gentleman led a life of which your noble aunt (author of "Legends of the Squeams's: or, Fair Fruits off a Family Tree,") has not given you the slightest idea.

It was before your grandmother adopted those serious views for which she was distinguished during her last long residence at Bath, and after Colonel Tibbalt married Miss Lye, the rich soap-boiler's heiress, that her ladyship's wild oats were sown. When she was young, she was as giddy as the rest of the genteel world. At her house in Hill Street, she had ten card-tables on Wednesdays and Sunday evenings, except for a short time when Ranelagh was open on Sundays. Every night of her life she gambled for eight, nine, ten hours. Everybody else in society did the like. She lost; she won; she cheated; she pawned her jewels; who knows what else she was not ready to pawn, so as to find funds to supply her fury for play? What was that after-supper duel at the "Shakspeare's Head" in Covent Garden, between your grandfather and Colonel Tibbalt: where they drew swords and engaged only in the presence of Sir John Screwby, who was drunk under the table? They were interrupted by Mr. John Fielding's people, and your grandfather was carried home to Hill Street wounded in a chair. I tell you those gentlemen in powder and ruffles, who turned out the toes of their buckled pumps so delicately, were terrible fellows. Swords were perpetually being drawn; bottles after bottles were drunk; oaths roared unceasingly in conversation; tavern-drawers and watchmen were pinked and maimed; chairmen belaboured; citizens insulted by reeling pleasure-hunters. You have been to Cremorne with proper "vouchers" of course? Do you remember our great theatres thirty years ago? You were too good to go to a play. Well, you have no idea what the playhouses were, or what the green boxes were, when Garrick and Mrs. Pritchard were playing before them! And I, for my children's sake, thank that good Actor in his retirement who was the first to banish that shame from the theatre. No, Madam, you are mistaken; I do *not* plume myself on my superior virtue. I do not say you are naturally better than your ancestress in her wild, rouged, gambling, flaring tearing days; or even than poor Polly Fogle, who is just taken up for shoplifting, and would have been hung for it a hundred years ago. Only, I am heartily thankful that my temptations are less, having quite enough to do with those of the present century.

So, if Harry Warrington rides down to Newmarket to the October meeting, and loses or wins his money there; if he makes one of a party at the "Shakspeare" or the "Bedford Head;" if he dines at White's ordinary, and sits down to macco and lansquenet afterwards; if he boxes the watch, and makes his appearance at the Roundhouse; if he turns out for a short space a wild, dissipated, harum-scarum young Harry Warrington; I, knowing the weakness of human nature, am not going to be surprised; and, quite aware of my own shortcomings, don't intend to be very savage at my neighbour's. Mr. Sampson was: in his chapel in Long Acre he whipped Vice tremendously; gave Sin no quarter; out-cursed Blasphemy with superior anathemas; knocked Drunkenness down, and trampled on the prostrate brute wallowing in the gutter; dragged out conjugal Infidelity, and pounded her with endless stones of rhetoric—and, after service, came to dinner at the "Star and Garter," made a bowl of punch for Harry and his friends at the "Bedford Head," or took a hand at whist at Mr. Warrington's lodgings, or my Lord March's, or wherever there was a supper and good company for him.

I often think, however, in respect of Mr. Warrington's doings at this period of his coming to London, that I may have taken my usual degrading and uncharitable views of him—for you see, I have not uttered a single word of virtuous indignation against his conduct, and if it was *not* reprehensible, have certainly judged him most cruelly. O the Truthful, O the Beautiful, O Modesty, O Benevolence, O Pudor, O Mores, O Blushing Shame, O Namby Pamby—each with your respective capital letters to your honoured names! O Niminy, O Piminy! how shall I dare for to go for to say that a young man ever was a young man?

No doubt, dear young lady, I am calumniating Mr. Warrington, according to my heartless custom. As a proof, here is a letter out of the Warrington collection, from Harry to his mother, in which there is not a single word that would lead you to suppose he was leading a wild life. And such a letter from an only son, to a fond and exemplary parent, we know must be true !—

"*Bond Street, London, October* 25, 1756.

"HONORD MADAM.—I take up my pen to acknowledge your honored favor of 10 July, per 'Lively Virginia' packet, which has duly come to hand, forwarded by our Bristol agent, and rejoice to hear that the prospect of the crops is so good. 'Tis Tully who says that agriculture is the noblest pursuit ; how delightful when that pursuit is also prophetable !

"Since my last, dated from Tunbridge Wells, one or two *insadence* have occurred of which it is *nessasery** I should advise my honored Mother. Our party there broke up end of August : the partridge-shooting commencing. Baroness Bernstein, whose kindness to me has been most invariable, has been to Bath, her usual winter resort, and has made me a welcome present of a fifty-pound bill. I rode back with Rev. Mr. Sampson, whose instruction I find *most vallublc*, and my cousin Lady Maria, to Castlewood.† I paid a flying visit on the way to my dear kind friends Col. and Mrs. Lambert, Oakhurst House, who send my honored mother their most affectionate remembrances. The youngest Miss Lambert, I grieve to say, was *dellicate ;* and her parents in some anxiety.

"At Castlewood I lament to state my stay was short, owing to a quarrel with my cousin William. He is a young man of violent passions, and alas ! addicted to liquor, when he has no controul over them. In a trifling dispute about a horse, high words arose between us, and he aymed a blow at me, or its equivulent—which my Grandfathers my honored mothers child could not brook. I rejoyned, and feld him to the ground, whents he was carried almost *sencelis* to bed. I sent to enquire after his health in the morning : but having no further news of him, came away to London, where I have been ever since with brief intavles of absence.

"Knowing you would wish me to see my dear Grandfathers University of Cambridge, I rode thither lately in company with some friends, passing through part of Harts, and lying at the famous bed of Ware. The October meeting was just begun at Cambridge when I went. I saw the students in *their gownds and capps*, and rode over to the famous Newmarket Heath, where there happened to be some races—my friend Lord Marchs horse Marrowbones by Cleaver coming off winner of a large *steak*. It was an amusing day—the jockeys, horses, &c., very different to our poor races at home—the betting awful—the richest noblemen here mix with the jox, and bett all round. Cambridge pleased me : especially King's College Chapel, of a rich but elegant Gothick.

"I have been out into the world, and am made member of the Club at White's, where I meet gentlemen of the first fashion. My Lords Rockingham, Carlisle, Orford, Bolingbroke, Coventry are of my friends, introduced to me by my Lord March, of whom I have often wrote before. Lady Coventry is a fine woman, but *thinn.* Every *lady paints* here, old and young; so, if you and Mountain and Fanny wish to be *in fashion*, I must send you out some *rooge-pots:* everybody plays—eight, ten, card-tables at every house on every receiving night. I am sorry to say all do not play fair, and some do not *pay* fair. I have been obliged to sit down, *and do as Rome does*, and have actually seen ladies whom I could name take my counters from before my face.

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* This word has been much operated upon with the penknife, but is left *sic*, no doubt to the writer's satisfaction.

† Could Parson Sampson have been dictating the above remarks to Mr Warrington ?

"One day, his regiment the 20th, being paraded in St. James's Park, a friend of mine, Mr. Wolfe, did me the honour to present me to his Royal Highness the Captain-General, who was *most gracious:* a fat, jolly Prince, if I may speak so without disrespect, reminding me in his manner of that unhappy General Braddock, whom we knew to our sorrow last year. When he heard my name, and how dearest George had served and fallen in Braddock's unfortunate campaign, he talked a great deal with me; asked why a young fellow like me did not serve too; why I did not go to the King of Prussia, who was a great General, and see a campaign or two; and whether that would not be better than dawdling about at routs and card-parties in London? I said, I would like to go with all my heart, but was an only son now, on leave from my mother, and belonged to our estate in Virginia. His Royal Highness said, Mr. Braddock had wrote home accounts of Mrs. Esmond's loyalty, and that he would gladly serve me. Mr. Wolfe and I have waited on him since, at his Royal Highness's house in Pall Mall. The latter, who is still quite a young man, made the Scots campaign with his Highness, whom Mr. Dempster *loves* so much at home. To be sure, he was too severe: if anything can be too severe against rebels in arms.

"Mr. Draper has had half the Stock, my late Papa's property, transferred to my name. Until there can be no doubt of that *painful loss* in our family which I would give my right hand to replace, the remaining stock must remain in the trustees' name in behalf of him who inherited it. Ah, dear mother! There is no day, scarce any hour, when I don't think of him. I wish he were by me often. I feel like as if I was better when I am thinking of him, and would like, for the honour of my family, that he was representing of it here instead of,

"Honored Madam,
"Your dutiful and affectionate Son,
"HENRY ESMOND WARRINGTON.

"P.S.—I am like *your sex*, who always, they say, put their chief news in a *poscrip.* I had something to tell you about a person to whom *my heart is engaged.* I shall write more about it, which there is no hurry. Safice she is a nobleman's daughter, and her family *as good as our own.*"

"*Clargis Street, London, October* 23, 1756.

"I think, my good sister, we have been all our lives a little more than kin and less than kind, to use the words of a poet whom your dear father loved dearly. When you were born in our Western Principallitie, my mother was not as old as Isaac's; but even then I was much more than old enough to be yours. And though she gave you all she could leave or give, including the little portion of love that ought to have been my share, yet, if we can have good will for one another, we may learn to do without affection: and some little kindness you owe me, for your son's sake as well as your father's, whom I loved and admired more than any man I think ever I knew in this world; he was greater than almost all, though he made no noyse in it. I have seen very many who have, and, believe me, have found but few with such good heads and good harts as Mr. Esmond.

"Had we been better acquainted, I might have given you some advice regarding your young gentleman's introduction to Europe, which you would have taken or not, as people do in this world. At least you would have sed afterwards, 'What she counselled me was right, and had Harry done as Madam Beatrix wisht, it had been better for him.' My good sister, it was not for you to know, or for me to whom you never wrote to tell you, but your boy in coming to England and Castlewood found but ill friends there; except one, an old aunt, of whom all kind of evil hath been spoken and sed these fifty years past—and not without cawse too, perhaps.

"Now, I must tell Harry's mother what will doubtless scarce astonish her, that almost everybody who knows him loves him. He is prudent of his tongue, generous of his money, as bold as a lyon, with an imperious domineering way that sets well upon him; you know whether he is handsome or not: my dear, I like him none the less for not being over witty or wise, and never cared for your *sett-the-Thames*-afire gentlemen, who are so much more clever than their neighbours. Your father's great friend, Mr. Addison, seemed to me but a supercilious prig, and his follower, Sir Dick Steele, was not pleasant in his cupps, nor out of 'em. And (*revenons à luy*) your Master Harry will certainly not burn *the river up* with his wits. Of book-learning he is as ignorant as any lord in England, and for this I hold him none the worse. If heaven have not given him a turn that way, 'tis of no use trying to bend him.

"Considering the place he is to hold in his own colony when he returns, and the stock he comes from, let me tell you, that he hath not means enough allowed him to support his station, and is likely to make the more *dépence* from the narrowness of his income—from sheer despair breaking out of all bounds, and becoming extravagant, which is not his turn. But he likes to live as well as the rest of his company, and, between ourselves, has fell into some of the finist and most rakish in England. He thinks 'tis for the honour of the family not to go back, and many a time calls for ortolans and champaign when he would as leaf dine with a stake and a mugg of beer. And in this kind of spirit I have no doubt from what he hath told me in his talk (which is very *naïf*, as the French say), that his mamma hath encouraged him in his high opinion of himself. We women like our belongings to have it, however little we love to pay the cost. Will you have your ladd make a figar in London? Trebble his allowance at the very least, and his Aunt Bernstein (with his honored mamma's permission) will add a little more on to whatever summ you give him. Otherwise he will be spending the little capital I learn he has in this country, which, when a ladd once begins to *manger*, there is very soon an end to the loaf. Please God, I shall be able to leave Henry Esmond's grandson something at my death; but my savings are small, and the pension with which my gracious Sovereign hath endowed me dies with me. As for *feu* M. de Bernstein, he left only debt at his decease: the officers of his Majesty's Electoral Court of Hannover are but scantily paid.

"A lady who is at present very high in his Majesty's confidence hath taken a great phancy to your ladd, and will take an early occasion to bring him to the Sovereign's favorable notice. His Royal Highness the Duke he hath seen. If live in America he must, why should not Mr. Esmond Warrington return as Governor of Virginia, and with a title to his name? That is what I hope for him.

"Meanwhile, I must be candid with you, and tell you I fear he hath entangled himself here in a very silly engagement. Even to marry an old woman for money is scarce pardonable—the game *ne valant guères la chandelle*—Mr. Bernstein, when alive, more than once assured me of this fact, and I believe him, poor gentleman! But to engage yourself to an old woman without money, and to marry her merely because you have promised her, this seems to me a follie which only very young ladds fall into, and I fear Mr. Warrington is one. How, or for what consideration, I know not, but my niece Maria Esmond hath *escamoté* a promise from Harry. He knows nothing of her *antécédens*, which I do. She hath laid herself out for twenty husbands these twenty years past. I care not how she hath got the promise from him. 'Tis a sinn and a shame that a woman more than forty years old should surprize the honour of a child like that, and hold him to his word. She is not the woman she pretends to be. A horse-jockey (he saith) cannot take him in—but a woman!

"I write this news to you advisedly, displeasant as it must be. Perhaps 'twill bring you to England: but I would be very cautious, above all, very gentle, for the bitt will instantly make his high spirit *restive.* I fear the property is entailed, so that threats of cutting him off from it will not move Maria. Otherwise I know her to be so mercenary that (though she really hath a great phancy for this handsome ladd) without money she would not hear of him. All I could, and more than I *ought*, I have done to prevent the match. What and more I will not say in writing; but that I am, for Henry Esmond's sake, his grandson's sincerest friend, and, Madam,

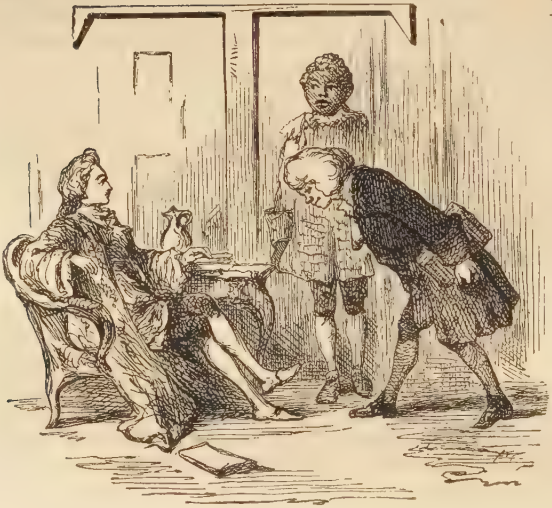
"Your faithful sister and servant,
"BEATRIX BARONESS DE BERNSTEIN."

"To Mrs. Esmond Warrington, of Castlewood, in Virginia."

On the back of this letter is written, in Madam Esmond's hand, "My sister Bernstein's letter, received with Henry's December 24: on receipt of which it was determined my son should instantly go home."

CHAPTER XLII.

FORTUNATUS NIMIUM.



THOUGH Harry Warrington persisted in his determination to keep that dismal promise which his cousin had extracted from him, we trust no benevolent reader will think so ill of him as to suppose that the engagement was to the young fellow's taste, and that he would not be heartily glad to be rid of it. Very likely the beating administered to poor Will was to this end; and Harry may have thought, "A boxing-match between us is sure to bring on a quarrel with the family; in the quarrel with the family, Maria may take her brother's side. I, of course, will make no retraction or apology. Will, in that case, may call me to account, when I know which is the better man. In the midst of the feud, the agreement may come to an end, and I may be a free man once more."

So honest Harry laid his train, and fired it: but, the explosion over, no harm was found to be done, except that William Esmond's nose was swollen, and his eye black for a week. He did not send a challenge to his cousin, Harry Warrington; and, in consequence, neither killed Harry, nor was killed by him. Will was knocked down, and he got up again. How many men of sense would do the same, could they get their little account settled in a private place, with nobody to tell how the score was paid! Maria by no means took her family's side in the quarrel, but declared for her cousin, as did my lord, when advised of the disturbance. Will had struck the first blow, Lord Castlewood said, by the Chaplain's showing. It was not the first or the tenth time he had been found quarrelling in his cups. Mr. Warrington only showed a proper spirit in resenting the injury, and it was for Will, not for Harry, to ask pardon.

Harry said he would accept no apology as long as his horse was not returned or his bet paid. This chronicler has not been able to find out, from any of the papers which have come under his view, how that affair of the bet was finally arranged: but 'tis certain the cousins presently met in the houses of various friends, and without mauling each other.

Maria's elder brother had been at first quite willing that his sister, who had remained unmarried for so many years, and on the train of whose robe, in her long course over the path of life, so many briars, so much mud, so many rents and stains had naturally gathered, should marry with any bridegroom who presented himself, and if with a gentleman from Virginia, so much the better. She would retire to his wigwam in the forest, and there be disposed of. In the natural course of things, Harry would survive his elderly bride, and might console himself or not, as he preferred, after her departure.

But, after an interview with Aunt Bernstein, which his lordship had on his coming to London, he changed his opinion: and even went so far as to try and dissuade Maria from the match; and to profess a pity for the young fellow who was to be made to undergo a life of misery on account of a silly promise given at one-and-twenty!

Misery, indeed! Maria was at a loss to know why he was to be miserable. Pity, forsooth! My lord at Castlewood had thought it was no pity at all. Maria knew what pity meant. Her brother had been with Aunt Bernstein: Aunt Bernstein had offered money to break this match off. *She* understood what my lord meant, but Mr. Warrington was a man of honour, and she could trust him. Away, upon this, walks my lord to White's, or to whatever haunts he frequented. It is probable that his sister had guessed too accurately what the nature of his conversation with Madame Bernstein had been.

"And so," thinks he, "the end of my virtue is likely to be that the Mohock will fall a prey to others, and that there is no earthly use in my sparing him. 'Quem Deus vult'—what was the schoolmaster's adage? If I don't have him, somebody else will, that is clear. My brother has had a slice; my dear sister wants to swallow the whole of him bodily. Here have I been at home respecting his youth and innocence forsooth, declining to play beyond the value of a sixpence, and acting guardian and Mentor to him. Why, I am but a fool to fatten a goose for other people to feed off! Not many a good action have I done in this life, and here is this one, that serves to benefit whom?—other folks. Talk of remorse! By all the fires and furies, the remorse I have is for things I haven't done and might have done! Why did I spare Lucretia? She hated me ever after, and her husband went the way for which he was predestined. Why have I let this lad off?—that March and the rest, who don't want him, may pluck him! And I have a bad repute; and I am the man people point at, and call the wicked lord, and against whom women warn their sons! Pardi, I am not a penny worse, only a great deal more unlucky than my neighbours, and 'tis only my cursed weakness that has been my greatest enemy!" Here, manifestly, in setting down a speech which a gentleman only *thought*, a chronicler overdraws his account with the patient reader, who has a right not to accept this draft on his credulity. But have not Livy, and Thucydides, and a score more of historians, made speeches for their heroes, which we know the latter never thought of delivering? How much more may we then, knowing my Lord Castlewood's character so intimately as we do, declare what was passing in his mind, and transcribe his thoughts on this paper? What? a whole pack of the wolves are on the hunt after this lamb, and will make a meal of him presently, and one hungry old hunter is to stand by, and not have a single cutlet? Who has not admired that noble speech of my Lord Clive, when reproached on his return from India with making rather too free with jaghires, lakhs, gold mohurs, diamonds, pearls, and what not: "Upon my life," said the hero of Plassy, "when I think of my opportunities, I am surprised I took so little!"

To tell disagreeable stories of a gentleman, until one is in a manner forced to impart them, is always painful to a feeling mind.

Hence, though I have known, before the very first page of this history was written, what sort of a person my Lord Castlewood was, and in what esteem he was held by his contemporaries, I have kept back much that was unpleasant about him, only allowing the candid reader to perceive that he was a nobleman who ought not to be at all of our liking. It is true that my Lord March, and other gentlemen of whom he complained, would have thought no more of betting with Mr. Warrington for his last shilling, and taking their winnings, than they would scruple to pick the bones of a chicken; that they would take any advantage of the game, or their superior skill in it, of the race, and their private knowledge of the horses engaged; in so far, they followed the practice of all gentlemen: but when they played, they played fair; and when they lost, they paid.

Now Madam Bernstein was loth to tell her Virginian nephew all she knew to his family's discredit; she was even touched by my lord's forbearance in regard to Harry on his first arrival in Europe; and pleased with his lordship's compliance with her wishes in this particular. But in the conversation which she had with her nephew Castlewood regarding Maria's designs on Harry, he had spoken his mind out with his usual cynicism, voted himself a fool for having spared a lad whom no sparing would eventually keep from ruin; pointed out Mr. Harry's undeniable extravagances and spendthrift associates, his nights at faro and hazard, and his rides to Newmarket, and asked why he alone should keep his hands from the young fellow? In vain Madam Bernstein pleaded that Harry was poor. Bah! he was heir to a principality which ought to have been his, Castlewood's, and might have set up their ruined family. (Indeed Madam Bernstein thought Mr. Warrington's Virginia property much greater than it was.) Were there not money-lenders in the town who would give him money on post-obits in plenty? Castlewood knew as much to his cost: he had applied to them in his father's lifetime, and the cursed crew had eaten up two-thirds of his miserable income. He spoke with such desperate candour and ill humour, that Madam Bernstein began to be alarmed for her favourite, and determined to caution him at the first opportunity.

That evening she began to pen a billet to Mr. Warrington; but all her life long she was slow with her pen, and disliked using it. "I never knew any good come of writing more than *bon jour* or business," she used to say. "What is the use of writing ill, when there are so many clever people who can do it well? and even then it were best left alone." So she sent one of her men to Mr. Harry's lodging, bidding him come and drink a dish of tea with her next day, when she proposed to warn him.

But the next morning she was indisposed, and could not receive Mr. Harry when he came: and she kept her chamber for a couple of days, and the next day there was a great engagement; and the next day Mr. Harry was off on some expedition of his own. In the whirl of London life, what man sees his neighbour, what brother his sister, what schoolfellow his old friend? Ever so many days passed before Mr. Warrington and his aunt had that confidential conversation which the latter desired.

She began by scolding him mildly about his extravagance and mad-cap frolics (though, in truth, she was charmed with him for both)—he replied that young men will be young men, and that it was in dutifully waiting in attendance on his aunt, he had made the acquaintance with whom he mostly lived at present. She then, with some prelude, began to warn him regarding his cousin, Lord Castlewood; on which he broke into a bitter laugh, and said the good-natured world had told him plenty about Lord Castlewood already. "To say of a man of his lordship's rank, or of any gentleman, 'Don't play with him,' is more than I like to do," continued the lady; "but . . ."

"Oh, you may say on, aunt!" said Harry, with something like an imprecation on his lips.

"And have you played with your cousin already?" asked the young man's worldly old monitress,

"And lost and won, Madam!" answers Harry, gallantly. "It don't become me to say which. If we have a bout with a neighbour in Virginia, a bottle, or a pack of cards, or a quarrel, we don't go home and tell our mothers. I mean no offence, aunt!" And, blushing, the handsome young fellow went up and kissed the old lady. He looked very brave and brilliant, with his rich lace, his fair face and hair, his fine new suit of velvet and gold. On taking leave of his aunt he gave his usual sumptuous benefactions to her servants, who crowded round him. It was a rainy winter day, and my gentleman, to save his fine silk stockings, must come in a chair. "To White's!" he called out to the chairmen, and away they carried him to the place where he passed a great deal of his time.

Our Virginian's friends might have wished that he had been a less sedulous frequenter of that house of entertainment! but so much may be said in favour of Mr. Warrington that, having engaged in play, he fought his battle like a hero. He was not flustered by good luck, and perfectly calm when the chances went against him. If Fortune is proverbially fickle to men at play, how many men are fickle to Fortune, run away frightened from her advances; and desert her, who, perhaps, had never thought of leaving them but for their cowardice. "By George, Mr. Warrington," said Mr. Selwyn, waking up in a rare fit of enthusiasm, "you deserve to win! You treat your luck as a gentleman should, and as long as she remains with you, behave to her with the most perfect politeness. Si celeres quatit pennas—you know the rest. No? Well, you are not much the worse off—you will call her ladyship's coach, and make her a bow at the step. Look at Lord Castlewood yonder, passing the box. Did you ever hear a fellow curse and swear so at losing five or six pieces? She must be a jade indeed, if she long give her favours to such a niggardly *canaille* as that!"

"We don't consider our family canaille, sir," says Mr. Warrington, "and my Lord Castlewood is one of them."

"I forgot. I forgot, and ask your pardon! And I make you my compliment upon my lord, and Mr. Will Esmond his brother," says Harry's neighbour at the hazard-table. "The box is with me. Five's the main! Deuce Ace! my usual luck. Virtute mea me involvo!" and he sinks back in his chair.

Whether it was upon this occasion of taking the box, that Mr. Harry threw the fifteen mains mentioned in one of those other letters of Mr. Walpole's, which have not come into his present learned editor's hands, I know not; but certain it is, that on his first appearance at "White's," Harry had five or six evenings of prodigious good luck, and seemed more than ever the Fortunate Youth. The five hundred pounds withdrawn from his patrimonial inheritance had multiplied into thousands. He bought fine clothes, purchased fine horses, gave grand entertainments, made handsome presents, lived as if he had been as rich as Sir James Lowther, or his Grace of Bedford, and yet the five thousand pounds never seemed to diminish. No wonder that he gave where giving was so easy; no wonder that he was generous with Fortunatus's purse in his pocket. I say no wonder that *he* gave, for such was his nature. Other Fortunati tie up the endless purse, drink small beer, and go to bed with a tallow candle.

During this vein of his luck, what must Mr. Harry do, but find out from Lady Maria what her ladyship's debts were, and pay them off to the last shilling. Her stepmother and half-sister, who did not love her, he treated to all sorts of magnificent presents. "Had you not better get yourself arrested, Will?" my lord sardonically said to his brother. "Although you bit him in that affair of the horse, the Mohock will certainly take you out of pawn." It was then that Mr. William felt a true remorse, though not of that humble kind which sent the repentant Prodigal to his knees. "Confound it," he groaned, "to think that I have let this fellow slip for such a little matter as fifty pound! Why, he was good for a thousand at least."

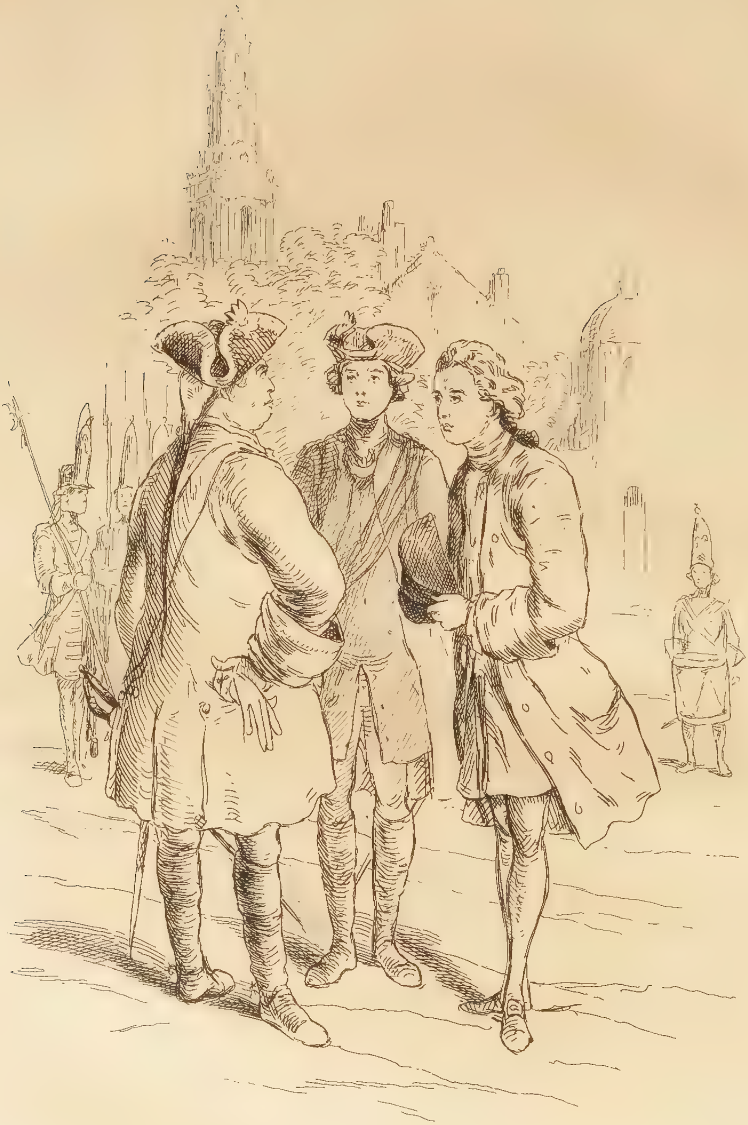
As for Maria, that generous creature accepted the good fortune sent her with a grateful heart; and was ready to accept as much more as you pleased. Having paid off her debts to her various milliners, tradesmen, and purveyors, she forthwith proceeded to contract new ones. Mrs. Betty, her ladyship's maid, went round informing the tradespeople that her mistress was about to contract a matrimonial alliance with a young gentleman of immense fortune; so that they might give my lady credit to any amount. Having heard the same story twice or thrice before, the tradesfolk might not give it entire credit, but their bills were paid: even to Mrs. Pincott, of Kensington, my lady showed no rancour, and affably ordered fresh supplies from her; and when she drove about from the mercer to the toy-shop, and from the toy-shop to the jeweller, in a coach, with her maid and Mr. Warrington inside, they thought her a fortunate woman indeed, to have secured the Fortunate Youth, though they might wonder at the taste of this latter in having selected so elderly a beauty. Mr. Sparks, of Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, took the liberty of waiting upon Mr. Warrington at his lodgings in Bond Street, with the pearl necklace and the gold etwee which he had bought in Lady Maria's company the day before; and asking whether he, Sparks, should leave them at his honour's lodging, or send them to her ladyship with his honour's compliments? Harry added a ring out of the stock which the jeweller happened to bring with him, to the necklace and the etwee; and sumptuously bidding that individual to send him in the bill, took a majestic leave of Mr. Sparks, who retired, bowing even to Gumbo, as he quitted his honour's presence.

Nor did his bounties end here. Ere many days the pleased young fellow drove up in his phaeton to Mr. Sparks' shop, and took a couple of trinkets for two young ladies, whose parents had been kind to him, and for whom he entertained a sincere regard. "Ah!" thought he, "how I wish I had my poor George's wit and genius for poetry! I would send these presents with pretty verses to Hetty and Theo. I am sure, if good-will and real regard could make a poet of me, I should have no difficulty in finding rhymes." And so he called in Parson Sampson, and they concocted a billet together.

CHAPTER XLIII.

IN WHICH HARRY FLIES HIGH.

SO Mr. Harry Warrington, of Virginia, had his lodgings in Bond Street, London, England, and lived upon the fat of the land, and drank bumpers of the best wine thereof. His title of Fortunate Youth was pretty generally recognized. Being young, wealthy, good-looking, and fortunate, the fashionable world took him by the hand and made him welcome. Harry was liked because he was likeable; because he was rich, handsome, jovial, well-born, well-bred, brave; because, with jolly topers, he liked a jolly song and a bottle; because, with gentlemen sportsmen, he loved any game that was a-foot or a-horseback; because, with ladies, he had a modest blushing timidity which rendered the lad interesting; because, to those humbler than himself in degree he was always magnificently liberal, and anxious to spare annoyance. Our Virginian was very grand, and high and mighty, to be sure; but, in those times, when the distinction of ranks yet obtained, to be high and distant with his inferiors, brought no unpopularity to a gentleman. Remember that, in those days, the Secretary of State always knelt when he went to the king with his despatches of a morning, and the Under-Secretary never dared to sit down in his chief's presence. If I were Secretary of State (and such there have been amongst men of letters since Addison's days) I should not like to kneel when I went in to my audience with my



HARRY IS PRESENTED TO A GREAT PERSONAGE

despatch-box. If I were Under-Secretary, I should not like to have to stand, whilst the Right Honourable Benjamin or the Right Honourable Sir Edward looked over the papers. But there is a *modus in rebus*: there are certain lines which must be drawn: and I am only half pleased, for my part, when Bob Bowstreet, whose connection with letters is through Policeman X and Y, and Tom Garbage, who is an esteemed contributor to the *Kennel Miscellany*, propose to join fellowship as brother literary men, slap me on the back, and call me old boy, or by my Christian name.

As much pleasure as the town could give in the winter season of 1756-57, Mr. Warrington had for the asking. There were operas for him, in which he took but moderate delight. (A prodigious deal of satire was brought to bear against these Italian Operas, and they were assailed for being foolish, Popish, unmanly, unmeaning; but people went, nevertheless.) There were the theatres, with Mr. Garrick and Mrs. Pritchard at one house, and Mrs. Clive at another. There were masquerades and ridottos, frequented by all the fine society; there were their lordships' and ladyships' own private drums and assemblies, which began and ended with cards, and which Mr. Warrington did not like so well as White's, because the play there was neither so high nor so fair as at the club-table.

One day his kinsman, Lord Castlewood, took him to Court, and presented Harry to his Majesty, who was now come to town from Kensington. But that gracious sovereign either did not like Harry's introducer, or had other reasons for being sulky. His Majesty only said, "Oh, heard of you from Lady Yarmouth. The Earl of Castlewood" (turning to his lordship, and speaking in German,) "shall tell him that he plays too much!" And so saying, the Defender of the Faith turned his royal back. Lord Castlewood shrank back quite frightened at this cold reception of his august master.

"What does he say?" asked Harry.

"His Majesty thinks they play too high at White's, and is displeased," whispered the nobleman.

"If he does not want us, we had better not come again, that is all," said Harry, simply. "I never, somehow, considered that German fellow a real King of England."

"Hush! for heaven's sake, hold your confounded colonial tongue!" cries out my lord. "Don't you see the walls here have ears?"

"And what then?" asks Mr. Warrington. "Why, look at the people! Hang me, if it is not quite a curiosity! They were all shaking hands with me, and bowing to me, and flattering me just now; and at present they avoid me as if I were the plague!"

"Shake hands, nephew," said a broad-faced, broad-shouldered gentleman in a scarlet-laced waistcoat, and a great old-fashioned wig. "I heard what you said. I have ears like the wall, look you. And, now, if other people show you the cold shoulder, I'll give you my hand." And so saying, the gentleman put out a great brown hand, with which he grasped Harry's. "Something of my brother about your eyes and face. Though I suppose in your island you grow more wiry and thin like. I am thine uncle, child. My name is Sir Miles Warrington. My lord knows me well enough."

My lord looked very frightened and yellow. "Yes, my dear Harry. This is your paternal uncle, Sir Miles Warrington."

"Might as well have come to see us in Norfolk, as dangle about playing the fool at Tunbridge Wells, Mr. Warrington, or Mr. Esmond,—which do you call yourself?" said the Baronet. "The old lady calls herself Madam Esmond, don't she?"

"My mother is not ashamed of her father's name, nor am I, uncle," said Mr. Harry, rather proudly.

"Well said, lad! Come home and eat a bit of mutton with Lady Warrington, at three, in Hill Street,—that is if you can do without your White's kickshaws. You need not look frightened, my Lord Castlewood! I shall tell no tales out of school."

"I—I am sure Sir Miles Warrington will act as a gentleman!" says my lord, in much perturbation.

"Belike he will," growled the Baronet, turning on his heel. "And thou wilt come, young man, at three; and mind, good roast mutton waits for nobody. Thou hast a great look of thy father. Lord bless us, how we used to beat each other! He was smaller than me, and in course younger; but many a time he had the best of it. Take it he was henpecked when he married, and Madam Esmond took the spirit out of him when she got him in her island. Virginia is an island. Ain't it an island?"

Harry laughed, and said "No!" And the jolly Baronet, going off, said, "Well, island or not, thou must come and tell all about it to my lady. *She'll* know whether 'tis an island or not."

"My dear Mr. Warrington," said my lord, with an appealing look, "I need not tell you that, in this great city, every man has enemies, and that there is a great, great deal of detraction and scandal. I never spoke to you about Sir Miles Warrington, precisely because I did know him, and because we have had differences together. Should he permit himself remarks to my disparagement, you will receive them *cum grano*, and remember that it is from an enemy they come." And the pair walked out of the King's apartments and into Saint James's Street. Harry found the news of his cold reception at court had already preceded him to White's. The King had turned his back upon him. The King was jealous of Harry's favour with the favourite. Harry was *au mieux* with Lady Yarmouth. A score of gentlemen wished him a compliment upon his conquest. Before night it was a settled matter that this was amongst the other victories of the Fortunate Youth.

Sir Miles told his wife and Harry as much, when the young man appeared at the appointed hour at the Baronet's dinner-table, and he rallied Harry in his simple rustic fashion. The lady, at first a grand and stately personage, told Harry, on their further acquaintance, that the reputation which the world had made for him was so bad, that at first she had given him but a frigid welcome. With the young ladies, Sir Miles's daughters, it was, "How d'ye do, cousin?" and "No, thank you, cousin," and a number of prim curtseys to the Virginian, as they greeted him and took leave of him. The little boy, the heir of the house, dined at table, under the care of his governor; and, having his glass of port by papa after dinner, gave a loose to his innocent tongue, and asked many questions of his cousin. At last the innocent youth said, after looking hard in Harry's face, "Are you wicked, Cousin Harry? You don't look very wicked!"

"My dear Master Miles!" expostulates the tutor, turning very red.

"But you know you said he was wicked!" cried the child.

"We are all miserable sinners, Miley," explains papa. "Haven't you heard the clergyman say so every Sunday?"

"Yes, but not so very wicked as Cousin Harry. Is it true that you gamble, cousin, and drink all night with wicked men, and frequent the company of wicked women? You know you said so, Mr. Walker—and mamma said so, too, that Lady Yarmouth was a wicked woman."

"And you are a little pitcher," cries papa: "and my wife, Nephew Harry, is a staunch Jacobite—you won't like her the worse for that. Take Miles to his sisters, Mr. Walker, and Topsham shall give thee a ride in the park, child, on thy little horse." The idea of the little horse consoled Master Miles; for, when his father ordered him away to his sisters, he had begun to cry bitterly, bawling out that he would far rather stay with his wicked cousin.

"They have made you a sad reputation among 'em, nephew!" says the jolly Baronet. "My wife, you must know, of late years, and since the death of my poor eldest son, has taken to,—to, hum!—to Tottenham Court Road and Mr. Whitfield's preaching: and we have had one Ward about the house, a friend of Mr. Walker's yonder, who has recounted sad stories about you and your brother at home."

"About me, Sir Miles, as much as he pleases," cries Harry, warm with port; "but I'll break any man's bones who dares say a word against my brother! Why, sir, that fellow was not fit to buckle my dear George's shoe; and if I find him repeating at home what he dared to say in our house in Virginia, I promise him a second caning."

"You seem to stand up for your friends, Nephew Harry," says the Baronet. "Fill thy glass, lad, thou art *not* as bad as thou hast been painted. I always told my lady so. I drink Madam Esmond Warrington's health, of Virginia, and will have a full bumper for that toast."

Harry, as in duty bound, emptied his glass, filled again, and drank Lady Warrington and Master Miles.

"Thou wouldst be heir to four thousand acres in Norfolk, did he die, though," said the Baronet.

"God forbid, sir, and be praised that I have acres enough in Virginia of my own!" says Mr. Warrington. He went up presently and took a dish of coffee with Lady Warrington: he talked to the young ladies of the house. He was quite easy, pleasant, and natural. There was one of them somewhat like Fanny Mountain, and this young lady became his special favourite. When he went away, they all agreed their wicked cousin was not near so wicked as they had imagined him to be: at any rate, my lady had strong hopes of rescuing him from the pit. She sent him a good book that evening, whilst Mr. Harry was at White's; with a pretty note, praying that "Law's Call" might be of service to him: and, this despatched, she and her daughters went off to a rout at the house of a minister's lady.

But Harry, before he went to White's, had driven to his friend Mr. Sparks, in Tavistock Street, and purchased more trinkets for his female cousins—"from their aunt in Virginia," he said. You see, he was full of kindness: he kindled and warmed with prosperity. There are men on whom wealth hath no such fortunate influence. It hardens base hearts: it makes those who were mean and servile, mean and proud. If it should please the gods to try me with ten thousand a year, I will, of course, meekly submit myself to their decrees, but I will pray them to give me strength enough to bear the trial. All the girls in Hill Street were delighted at getting the presents from Aunt Warrington in Virginia, and addressed a collective note, which must have astonished that good lady when she received it in Spring time, when she and Mountain and Fanny were on a visit to grim, deserted Castlewood, when the snows had cleared away, and a thousand peach-trees flushed with blossoms. "Poor boy!" the mother thought. "This is some present he gave his cousins in my name, in the time of his prosperity—nay, of his extravagance and folly. How quickly his wealth has passed away! But he ever had a kind heart for the poor, Mountain; and we must not forget him in his need. It behoves us to be more than ever careful of our own expenses, my good people!" And so, I dare say, they warmed themselves by one log, and ate of one dish, and worked by one candle. And the widow's servants, whom the good soul began to pinch more and more I fear, lied, stole, and cheated more and more: and what was saved in one way, was stole in another.

One afternoon, Mr. Harry sat in his Bond Street lodgings, arrayed in his dressing-gown, sipping his chocolate, surrounded by luxury, encased in satin, and yet enveloped in care. A few weeks previously, when the luck was with him, and he was scattering his benefactions to and fro, he had royally told Parson Sampson to get together a list of his debts, which he, Mr. Warrington, would pay. Accordingly, Sampson had gone to work, and had got together a list, not of all his debts,—no man ever does set down all,—but such a catalogue as he thought sufficient to bring in to Mr. Warrington, at whose breakfast-table the divine had humbly waited until his honour should choose to attend it.

Harry appeared at length, very pale and languid, in curl-papers, had scarce any appetite for his breakfast; and the Chaplain, fumbling with his schedule in his pocket, humbly asked if his patron had had a bad night? Yes, his honour had had a very bad night. He had been brought home from White's by two chairmen at five o'clock in the morning; had caught a confounded cold, for one of the windows of the chair would not shut, and the rain and snow came in; finally, was in such a bad humour, that all poor Sampson's quirks and jokes could scarcely extort a smile from him.

At last, to be sure, Mr. Warrington burst into a loud laugh. It was when the poor Chaplain, after a sufficient discussion of muffins, eggs, tea, the news, the theatres, and so forth, pulled a paper out of his pocket, and in a piteous tone said, "Here is that schedule of debts which your honour asked for—two hundred and forty-three pounds—every shilling I owe in the world, thank heaven!—that is—ahem!—every shilling of which the payment will in the least inconvenience me—and I need not tell my dearest patron that I shall consider him my saviour and benefactor!"

It was then that Harry, taking the paper and eyeing the Chaplain with rather a wicked look, burst into a laugh, which was, however, anything but jovial. Wicked execrations, moreover, accompanied this outbreak of humour, and the luckless Chaplain felt that his petition had come at the wrong moment.

"Confound it, why didn't you bring it on Monday?" Harry asked.

"Confound me, why did I not bring it on Monday?" echoed the Chaplain's timid soul. "It is my luck—my usual luck. Have the cards been against you, Mr. Warrington?"

"Yes: a plague on them. Monday night, and last night, have both gone against me. Don't be frightened, Chaplain, there's money enough in the locker yet. But I must go into the City and get some."

"What, sell out, sir?" asks his Reverence, with a voice that was re-assured, though it intended to be alarmed.

"Sell out, sir? Yes! I borrowed a hundred of Mackreth in counters last night, and must pay him at dinner-time. I will do your business for you nevertheless, and never fear, my good Mr. Sampson. Come to breakfast to-morrow, and we will see and deliver your Reverence from the Philistines." But though he laughed in Sampson's presence, and strove to put a good face upon the matter, Harry's head sank down on his chest when the parson quitted him, and he sat over the fire, beating the coals about with the poker, and giving utterance to many naughty disjointed words, which showed, but did not relieve, the agitation of his spirit.

In this mood, the young fellow was interrupted by the appearance of a friend, who on any other day—even on that one when his conscience was so uneasy—was welcome to Mr. Warrington. This was no other than Mr. Lambert, in his military dress, but with a cloak over him, who had come from the country, had been to the Captain-General's levée that morning, and had come thence to visit his young friend in Bond Street.

Harry may have thought Lambert's greeting rather cold; but being occupied with his own affairs, he put away that notion. How were the ladies of Oakhurst, and Miss Hetty, who was ailing when he passed through in the autumn? Purely? Mr. Warrington was very glad. They were come to stay awhile in London with their friend Lord Wrotham? Mr. Harry was delighted—though it must be confessed his face did not exhibit any peculiar signs of pleasure when he heard the news.

"And so you live at White's, and with the great folks; and you fare sumptuously every day, and you pay your court at St. James's, and make one at my Lady Yarmouth's routs, and at all the card-parties in the Court end of the town?" asks the Colonel.

"My dear Colonel, I do what other folks do," says Harry, with rather a high manner.

"Other folks are richer folks than some folks, my dear lad."

"Sir!" says Mr. Warrington, "I would thank you to believe that I owe nothing for which I cannot pay!"

"I should never have spoken about your affairs," said the other, not noticing the young man's haughty tone, "but that you yourself confided them to me. I hear all sorts of stories about the Fortunate Youth. Only at his Royal Highness's even to-day, they were saying how rich you were already, and I did not undeceive them—"

"Colonel Lambert, I can't help the world gossiping about me!" cries Mr. Warrington, more and more impatient.

"—And what prodigious sums you had won. Eighteen hundred one night—two thousand another—six or eight thousand in all! Oh! there were gentlemen from White's at the levée too, I can assure you, and the army can fling a main as well as you civilians!"

"I wish they would meddle with their own affairs," says Harry, scowling at his old friend.

"And I, too, you look as if you were going to say. Well, my boy, it *is* my affair, and you must let Theo's father and Hetty's father, and Harry Warrington's father's old friend say *how* it is my affair." Here the Colonel drew a packet out of his pocket. "Look you, Harry. These trinkets which you sent with the kindest heart in the world to people who love you, and would cut off their little hands to spare you needless pain, could never be bought by a young fellow with two or three hundred a year. Why, a nobleman might buy these things, or a rich City banker, and send them to his—to his daughters, let us say."

"Sir, as you say, I meant only kindness," says Harry, blushing burning-red.

"But you must not give them to my girls, my boy. Hester and Theodosia Lambert must not be dressed up with the winnings off the gaming-table, saving your presence. It goes to my heart to bring back the trinkets. Mrs. Lambert will keep her present, which is of small value, and sends you her love and a God bless you—and so say I, Harry Warrington, with all my heart." Here the good Colonel's voice was much moved, and his face grew very red, and he passed his hand over his eyes ere he held it out.

But the spirit of rebellion was strong in Mr. Warrington. He rose up from his seat, never offering to take the hand which his senior held out to him. "Give me leave to tell Colonel Lambert," he said, "that I have had somewhat too much advice from him. You are for ever volunteering it, sir, and when I don't ask it. You make it your business to inquire about my gains at play, and about the company I keep. What right have you to control my amusements or my companions? I strive to show my sense of your former kindness by little presents to your family, and you fling—you bring them back."

"I can't do otherwise, Mr. Warrington," says the Colonel, with a very sad face.

"Such a slight may mean nothing here, sir, but in our country it means war, sir!" cries Mr. Warrington. "God forbid I should talk of drawing a sword against the father of ladies who have been as mother and sister to me: but you have wounded my heart, Colonel Lambert—you have, I won't say insulted, but humiliated me, and this is a treatment I will bear from no man alive! My servants will attend you to the door, sir!" Saying which, and rustling in his brocade dressing-gown, Mr. Warrington, with much state, walked off to his bedroom.

CHAPTER XLIV.

CONTAINS WHAT MIGHT, PERHAPS, HAVE BEEN EXPECTED.

ON the rejection of his peace-offerings, our warlike young American chief chose to be in great wrath not only against Colonel Lambert, but the whole of that gentleman's family. "He has humiliated me before the girls!" thought the young man. "He and Mr. Wolfe, who were for ever preaching morality to me, and giving themselves airs of superiority and protection, have again been holding me up to the family as a scapegrace and prodigal. They are so virtuous that they won't shake me by the hand, forsooth; and when I want to show them a little common gratitude, they fling my presents in my face!"

"Why, sir, the things must be worth a little fortune!" says Parson Sampson, casting an eye of covetousness on the two morocco boxes, in which, on their white satin cushions, reposed Mr. Sparks's golden gewgaws.

"They cost me some money, Sampson," says the young man. "Not that I would grudge ten times the amount to people who have been kind to me."

"No, faith, sir, not if *I* know your honour!" interjects Sampson, who never lost a chance of praising his young patron to his face.

"The repeater, they told me, was a great bargain, and worth a hundred pounds at Paris. Little Miss Hetty I remember saying that she longed to have a repeating watch."

"Oh, what a love!" cries the Chaplain. "With a little circle of pearls on the back, and a diamond knob for the handle! Why, 'twould win any woman's heart, sir!"

"There passes an apple-woman with a basket. I have a mind to fling the thing out to her!" cries Mr. Warrington, fiercely.

When Harry went out upon business, which took him to the City and the Temple, his parasite did not follow him very far into the Strand; but turned away, owning that he had a terror of Chancery Lane, its inhabitants, and precincts. Mr. Warrington went then to his broker, and they walked to the Bank together, where they did some little business, at the end of which, and after the signing of a trifling signature or two, Harry departed with a certain number of crisp bank-notes in his pocket. The broker took Mr. Warrington to one of the great dining-houses for which the City was famous then as now; and afterwards showed Mr. Warrington the Virginia walk upon 'Change, through which Harry passed rather shamefacedly. What would a certain lady in Virginia say, he thought, if she knew that he was carrying off in that bottomless gambler's pocket a great portion of his father's patrimony? Those are all Virginia merchants, thinks he, and they are all talking to one another about me, and all saying, "That is young Esmond, of Castlewood, on the Potomac, Madam Esmond's son; and he has been losing his money at play, and he has been selling out so much, and so much, and so much."

His spirits did not rise until he had passed under the traitors' heads of Temple Bar, and was fairly out of the City. From the Strand Mr. Harry walked home, looking in at St. James's Street by the way; but there was nobody there as yet, the company not coming to the Chocolate House till a later hour.

Arrived at home, Mr. Harry pulls out his bundle of bank-notes; puts three of them into a sheet of paper, which he seals carefully, having previously written within the sheet the words, "Much good may they do you. H. E. W." And this packet he directs to the Reverend Mr. Sampson,—leaving it on the chimney-glass, with directions to his servants to give it to that divine when he should come in.

And now his honour's phaeton is brought to the door, and he steps in, thinking to drive round the park; but the rain coming on, or the east wind blowing, or some other reason arising, his honour turns his horses' heads down St. James's Street, and is back at White's at about three o'clock. Scarce anybody has come in yet. It is the hour when folks are at dinner. There, however, is my cousin Castlewood, lounging over the *Public Advertiser*, having just come off from his duty at Court hard by.

Lord Castlewood is yawning over the *Public Advertiser*. What shall they do? Shall they have a little picquet? Harry has no objection to a little picquet. "Just for an hour," says Lord Castlewood. "I dine at Arlington Street at four." "Just for an hour," says Mr. Warrington; and they call for cards.

"Or shall we have 'em in upstairs?" says my lord. "Out of the noise?"

"Certainly, out of the noise," says Harry.

At five o'clock a half-dozen of gentlemen have come in after their dinner, and are at cards, or coffee, or talk. The folks from the ordinary have not left the table yet. There the gentlemen of White's will often sit till past midnight.

One toothpick points over the coffee-house blinds into the street. "Whose phaeton?" asks Toothpick 1 of Toothpick 2.

"The Fortunate Youth's," says No. 2.

"Not so fortunate the last three nights. Luck confoundedly against him. Lost, last night, thirteen hundred to the table. Mr. Warrington been here to-day, John?"

"Mr. Warrington is in the house now, sir. In the little tea-room with Lord Castlewood since three o'clock. They are playing at picquet," says John.

"What fun for Castlewood," says No. 1, with a shrug.

The second gentleman growls out an execration. "Curse the fellow!" he says. "He has no right to be in this club at all. He doesn't pay if he loses. Gentlemen ought not to play with him. Sir Miles Warrington told me at Court the other day, that Castlewood has owed him money on a bet these three years."

"Castlewood," says No. 1, "don't lose if he plays alone. A large company *flurries* him, you see—that's why he doesn't come to the table." And the facetious gentleman grins, and shows all his teeth, polished perfectly clean.

"Let's go up and stop 'em," growls No. 2.

"Why?" asks the other. "Much better look out a-window. Lamplighter going up the ladder—famous sport. Look at that old putt in the chair: did you ever see such an old quiz?"

"Who is that just gone out of the house? As I live, it's Fortunatus! He seems to have forgotten that his phaeton has been here, waiting all the time. I bet you two to one he has been losing to Castlewood."

"Jack, do you take me to be a fool?" asks the one gentleman of the other. "Pretty pair of horses the youth has got. How he is flogging 'em!" And they see Mr. Warrington galloping up the street, and scared coachmen and chairmen clearing before him: presently my Lord Castlewood is seen to enter a chair, and go his way.

Harry drives up to his own door. It was but a few yards, and those poor horses have been beating the pavement all this while in the rain. Mr. Gumbo is engaged at the door in conversation with a countryfied looking lass, who trips off with a curtsey. Mr. Gumbo is always engaged with some pretty maid or other.

"Gumbo, has Mr. Sampson been here?" asks Gumbo's master from his driving seat.

"No, sar. Mr. Sampson have not been here!" answers Mr. Warrington's gentleman. Harry bids him to go upstairs and bring down a letter addressed to Mr. Sampson.

"Addressed to Mr. Sampson? Oh, yes, sir," says Mr. Gumbo, who can't read.

"A sealed letter, stupid! on the mantelpiece, in the glass!" says Harry; and Gumbo leisurely retires to fetch that document. As soon as Harry has it, he turns his horses' heads towards St. James's Street, and the two gentlemen, still yawning out of the window at White's, behold the Fortunate Youth, in an instant, back again.

As they passed out of the little tea-room where he and Lord Castlewood had had their picquet together, Mr. Warrington had seen that several gentlemen had entered the play-room, and that there was a bank there. Some were already steadily at work, and had their gaming jackets on: they kept such coats at the club, which they put on when they had a mind to sit down to a regular night's play.

Mr. Warrington goes to the clerk's desk, pays his account of the previous night, and, sitting down at the table, calls for fresh counters. This has been decidedly an unlucky week with the Fortunate Youth, and to-night is no more fortunate than previous nights have been. He calls for more counters, and more presently. He is a little pale and silent, though very easy and polite when talked to. But he cannot win.

At last he gets up. "Hang it! stay and mend your luck!" says Lord March, who is sitting by his side with a heap of counters before him, green and white. "Take a hundred of mine, and go on!"

"I have had enough for to-night, my lord," says Harry, and rises and goes away, and eats a broiled bone in the coffee-room, and walks back to his lodgings some time about midnight. A man after a great catastrophe commonly sleeps very well. It is the waking in the morning which is sometimes queer and unpleasant. Last night you proposed to Miss Brown: you quarrelled over your cups with Captain Jones, and valorously pulled his nose: you played at cards with Colonel Robinson, and gave him—oh, how many I O U's! These thoughts, with a fine headache, assail you in the morning watches. What a dreary, dreary gulf between to-day and yesterday! It seems as if you are years older. Can't you leap back over that chasm again, and is it not possible that Yesterday is but a dream? There you are, in bed. No daylight in at the windows yet. Pull your nightcap over your eyes, the blankets over your nose, and sleep away Yesterday. Psha, man, it *was* but a dream! Oh no, no! The sleep won't come. The watchman bawls some hour—what hour? Harry minds him that he has got the repeating watch under his pillow which he had bought for Hester. Ting, ting, ting! the repeating watch sings out six times in the darkness, with a little supplementary performance indicating the half hour. Poor dear little Hester!—so bright, so gay, so innocent! he would have liked her to have that watch. What will Maria say? (Oh, that old Maria! what a bore she is beginning to be! he thinks.) What will Madam Esmond at home say when she hears that he has lost every shilling of his ready money—of his patrimony? All his winnings, and five thousand pounds besides, in three nights. Castlewood could not have played him false? No. My lord knows picquet better than Harry does, but he would not deal unfairly with his own flesh and blood. No, no. Harry is glad his kinsman, who wanted the money, has got it. And for not one more shilling than he possessed, would he play. It was when he counted up his losses at the gaming-table, and found they would cover all the remainder of his patrimony, that he passed the box and left the table. But, O cursed bad company! O extravagance and folly! O humiliation and remorse! "Will my mother at home forgive me?" thinks the young prodigal. "Oh, that I were there, and had never left it!"

The dreary London dawn peeps at length through shutters and curtains. The housemaid enters to light his honour's fire and admit the dun morning into his windows. Her Mr. Gumbo presently follows, who warms his master's dressing gown and sets out his shaving-plate and linen. Then arrives the hairdresser to curl and powder his honour, whilst he reads his morning's letters; and at breakfast-time comes that inevitable Parson Sampson, with eager looks and servile smiles, to wait on his patron. The parson would have returned yesterday according to mutual agreement, but some jolly fellows kept him to dinner at the "St. Alban's," and, faith, they made a night of it.

"Oh, Parson!" groans Harry, "'twas the worst night you ever made in your life! Look here, sir!"

"Here is a broken envelope with the words, 'Much good may it do you,' written within," says the Chaplain, glancing at the paper.

"Look on the outside, sir!" cries Mr. Warrington. "The paper was directed to you." The poor Chaplain's countenance exhibited great alarm. "Has some one broke it open, sir?" he asks.

"Some one, yes. I broke it open, Sampson. Had you come here as you proposed yesterday afternoon, you would have found that envelope full of bank-notes. As it is, they were all dropped at the infernal macco-table last night."

"What, all?" says Sampson.

"Yes, all, with all the money I brought away from the city, and all the ready money I have left in the world. In the afternoon I played picquet with my cous—with a gentleman at White's—and he eased me of all the money I had about me. Remembering that there was still some money left here, unless you had fetched it, I came home and carried it back and left it at the macco-table, with every shilling besides that belongs to me—and—great heaven, Sampson, what's the matter, man?"

"It's my luck, it's my usual luck," cries out the unfortunate Chaplain, and fairly bursts into tears.

"What! You are not whimpering like a baby at the loss of a loan of a couple of hundred pounds?" cries out Mr. Warrington, very fierce and angry. "Leave the room, Gumbo! Confound you! why are you always poking your woolly head in at that door?"

"Some one below wants to see Master with a little bill," says Mr. Gumbo.

"Tell him to go to Jericho!" roars out Mr. Warrington. "Let me see nobody! I am not at home, sir, at this hour of the morning!"

A murmur or two, a scuffle is heard on the landing-place, and silence finally ensues. Mr. Warrington's scorn and anger are not diminished by this altercation. He turns round savagely upon unhappy Sampson, who sits with his head buried in his breast.

"Hadn't you better take a bumper of brandy to keep your spirits up, Mr. Sampson?" he asks. "Hang it, man! don't be snivelling like a woman!"

"Oh, it's not me!" says Sampson, tossing his head. "I am used to it, sir."

"Not you! Who then? Are you crying because somebody else is hurt, pray?" asks Mr. Warrington.

"Yes, sir!" says the Chaplain, with some spirit; "because somebody else is hurt, and through my fault. I have lodged for many years in London with a bootmaker, a very honest man: and, a few days since, having a perfect reliance upon—upon a friend who had promised to accommodate me with a loan—I borrowed sixty pounds from my landlord which he was about to pay to his own. I can't get the money. My poor landlord's goods will be seized for rent; his wife and dear young children will be turned into the street; and this honest family will be ruined through my fault. But, as you say, Mr. Warrington, I ought not to snivel like a woman. I will remember that you helped me once, and will bid you farewell, sir."

And, taking his broad-leafed hat, Mr. Chaplain walked out of the room.

An execration and a savage laugh, I am sorry to say, burst out of Harry's lips at this sudden movement of the Chaplain's. He was in such a passion with himself, with circumstances, with all people round about him, that he scarce knew where to turn, or what he said. Sampson heard the savage laughter, and then the voice of Harry calling from the stairs, "Sampson, Sampson! hang you! come back! It's a mistake! I beg your pardon!" But the Chaplain was cut to the soul, and walked on. Harry heard the door of the street as the Parson slammed it. It thumped on his own breast. He entered his room, and sank back on his luxurious chair there. He was Prodigal, amongst the swine—his foul remorses; they had tripped him up, and were wallowing over him. Gambling, extravagance, debauchery, dissolute life, reckless companions, dangerous women—they were all upon him in a herd, and were trampling upon the prostrate young sinner.

Prodigal was not, however, yet utterly overcome, and had some fight left in him. Dashing the filthy importunate brutes aside, and, as it were, kicking his ugly remembrances away from him, Mr. Warrington seized a great glass of that fire-water which he had recommended to poor humiliated Parson Sampson, and flinging off his fine damask robe, rang for the trembling Gumbo, and ordered his coat. "Not that!" roars he, as Gumbo brings him a fine green coat with plated buttons and a gold cord. "A plain suit—the plainer the better! The black clothes." And Gumbo brings the mourning-coat which his master had discarded for some months past.

Mr. Harry then takes:—1, his fine new gold watch; 2, his repeater (that which he had bought for Hetty), which he puts into his other fob; 3, his necklace, which he had purchased for Theo; 4, his rings, of which my gentleman must have half-a-dozen at least (with the exception of his grandfather's old seal ring, which he kisses and lays down on the pincushion again); 5, his three gold snuffboxes; and 6, his purse, knitted by his mother, and containing three shillings and sixpence and a pocket-piece brought from Virginia: and putting on his hat, issues from his door.

At the landing he is met by Mr. Ruff, his landlord, who bows and cringes and puts into his honour's hand a strip of paper a yard long. "Much obliged if Mr. Warrington will settle. Mrs. Ruff has a large account to make up to-day." Mrs. Ruff is a milliner. Mr. Ruff is one of the head-waiters and aides-de-camp of Mr. Mackreth, the proprietor of White's Club. The sight of the landlord does not add to the lodger's good humour.

"Perhaps his honour will have the kindness to settle the little account?" asks Mr. Ruff.

"Of course I will settle the account," says Harry, glumly looking down over Mr. Ruff's head from the stair above him.

"Perhaps Mr. Warrington will settle it now?"

"No, sir, I will *not* settle it now!" says Mr. Warrington, bullying forward.

"I'm very—very much in want of money, sir," pleads the voice under him. "Mrs. Ruff is ——"

"Hang you, sir, get out of the way!" cries Mr. Warrington, ferociously, and driving Mr. Ruff backward to the wall, sending him almost topsy-turvy down his own landing, he tramps down the stair, and walks forth into Bond Street.

The Guards were at exercise at the King's Mews at Charing Cross, as Harry passed, and he heard their drums and fifes, and looked in at the gate, and saw them at drill. "I can shoulder a musket at any rate," thought he to himself gloomily, as he strode on. He crossed St. Martin's Lane (where he transacted some business), and so made his way into Long Acre, and to the bootmaker's house where friend Sampson lodged. The woman of the house said Mr. Sampson was not at home, but had promised to be at home at one; and, as she knew Mr. Warrington, showed him up to the Parson's apartments, where he sat down, and, for want of occupation, tried to read an unfinished sermon of the Chaplain's. The subject was the Prodigal Son. Mr. Harry did not take very accurate cognisance of the sermon.

Presently he heard the landlady's shrill voice on the stair, pursuing somebody who ascended, and Sampson rushed into the room, followed by the sobbing woman.

At seeing Harry, Sampson started, and the landlady stopped. Absorbed in her own domestic cares, she had doubtless forgot that a visitor was awaiting her lodger. "There's only thirteen pound in the house, and he will be here at one, I tell you!" she was bawling out, as she pursued her victim.

"Hush, hush! my good creature!" cries the gasping Chaplain, pointing to Harry, who rose from the window-seat. "Don't you see Mr. Warrington? I've business with him—most important business. It will be all right, I tell you!" And he soothed and coaxed Mrs. Landlady out of the room, with the crowd of anxious little ones hanging at her coats.

"Sampson, I have come to ask your pardon again," says Mr. Warrington, rising up. "What I said to-day to you was very cruel and unjust, and unlike a gentleman."

"Not a word more, sir," says the other, coldly and sadly, bowing and scarcely pressing the hand which Harry offered him.

"I see you are still angry with me," Harry continues.

"Nay, sir, an apology is an apology. A man of my station can ask for no more from one of yours. No doubt you did not mean to give me pain. And what if you did? And you are not the only one of the family who has," he said, as he looked piteously round the room. "I wish I had never known the name of Esmond or Castlewood," he continues, "or that place yonder of which the picture hangs over my fireplace, and where I have buried myself these long, long years. My lord, your cousin, took a fancy to me, said he would make my fortune, has kept me as his dependant till fortune has passed by me, and now refuses me my due."

"How do you mean your due, Mr. Sampson?" asks Harry.

"I mean three years' salary which he owes me as Chaplain of Castlewood. Seeing you could give me no money, I went to his lordship this morning, and asked him. I fell on my knees, and asked him, sir. But his lordship had none. He gave me civil words, at least (saving your presence, Mr. Warrington), but no money—that is, five guineas, which he declared was all he had, and which I took. But what are five guineas amongst so many? Oh, those poor little children! those poor little children!"

"Lord Castlewood said he had no money?" cries out Harry. "He won eleven hundred pounds, yesterday, of me at picquet—which I paid him out of this pocket-book."

"I dare say, sir—I dare say, sir. One can't believe a word his lordship says, sir," says Mr. Sampson; "but I am thinking of execution in this house and ruin upon these poor folks to-morrow."

"That need not happen," says Mr. Warrington. "Here are eighty guineas, Sampson. As far as they go, God help you! 'Tis all I have to give you. I wish to my heart I could give more as I promised; but you did not come at the right time, and I am a poor devil now until I get my remittances from Virginia."

The Chaplain gave a wild look of surprise, and turned quite white. He flung himself down on his knees and seized Harry's hand.

"Great powers, sir!" says he, "are you a guardian angel that heaven hath sent me? You quarrelled with my tears this morning, Mr. Warrington. I can't help them now. They burst, sir, from a grateful heart. A rock of stone would pour them forth, sir, before such goodness as yours! May heaven eternally bless you, and give you prosperity! May my unworthy prayers be heard in your behalf, my friend, my best benefactor! May——"

"Nay, nay! get up, friend—get up, Sampson!" says Harry, whom the Chaplain's adulation and fine phrases rather annoyed.

"I am glad to have been able to do you a service—sincerely glad. There—there! Don't be on your knees to me!"

"To heaven who sent you to me, sir!" cries the Chaplain. "Mrs. Weston! Mrs. Weston!"

"What is it, sir?" says the landlady instantly, who, indeed, had been at the door the whole time. "We are saved, Mrs. Weston! We are saved!" cries the Chaplain. "Kneel, kneel, woman, and thank our benefactor! Raise your innocent voices, children, and bless him!" A universal whimper arose round Harry, which the Chaplain led off, whilst the young Virginian stood, simpering and well pleased, in the midst of this congregation. They *would* worship, do what he might. One of the children, not understanding the kneeling order, and standing up, the mother fetched her a slap on the ear, crying, "Drat it, Jane, kneel down, and bless the gentleman, I tell 'ee!" . . . . We leave them performing this sweet benedictory service. Mr. Harry walks off from Long Acre, forgetting almost the griefs of the former four or five days, and tingling with the consciousness of having done a good action.

The young woman with whom Gumbo had been conversing on that evening when Harry drove up from White's to his lodging, was Mrs. Molly, from Oakhurst, the attendant of the ladies there. Wherever that fascinating Gumbo went, he left friends and admirers in the servants'-hall. I think we said it was on a Wednesday evening he and Mrs. Molly had fetched a walk together, and they were performing the amiable courtesies incident upon parting, when Gumbo's master came up, and put an end to their twilight whisperings and what not.

For many hours on Wednesday, on Thursday, on Friday, a pale little maiden sat at a window in Lord Wrotham's house, in Hill Street, her mother and sister wistfully watching her. She would not go out. They knew whom she was expecting. He passed the door once, and she might have thought he was coming, but he did not. He went into a neighbouring house. Papa had never told the girls of the presents which Harry had sent, and only whispered a word or two to their mother regarding his quarrel with the young Virginian.

On Saturday night there was an opera of Mr. Handel's, and papa brought home tickets for the gallery. Hetty went this evening. The change would do her good, Theo thought, and—and, perhaps there might be Somebody amongst the fine company; but Somebody was not there; and Mr. Handel's fine music fell blank upon the poor child. It might have been Signor Bononcini's, and she would have scarce known the difference.

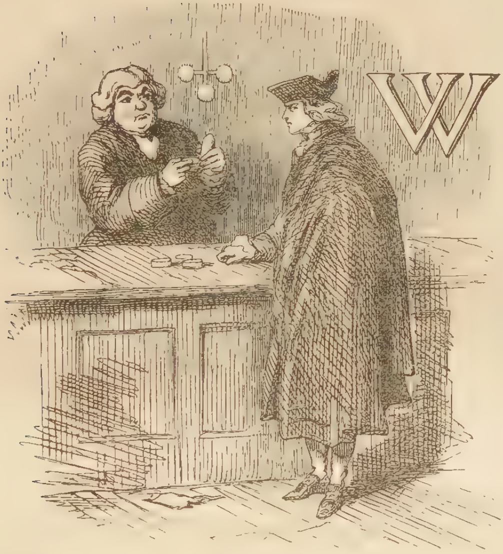
As the children are undressing, and taking off those smart new satin sacks in which they appeared at the Opera, looking so fresh and so pretty amongst all the tawdry rouged folk, Theo remarks how very sad and wobegone Mrs. Molly, their maid, appears. Theo is always anxious when other people seem in trouble; not so Hetty, now, who is suffering, poor thing, from one of the most selfish maladies which ever visits mortals. Have you ever been amongst insane people, and remarked how they never, never think of any but themselves?

"What is the matter, Molly?" asks kind Theo: and, indeed, Molly has been longing to tell her young ladies. "Oh, Miss Theo! Oh, Miss Hetty!" she says. "How ever can I tell you? Mr. Gumbo have been here, Mr. Warrington's coloured gentleman, Miss; and he says Mr. Warrington have been took by two bailiffs this evening, as he comes out of Sir Miles Warrington's house, three doors off."

"Silence!" cries Theo, quite sternly. Who is it that gives those three shrieks? It is Mrs. Molly, who chooses to scream, because Miss Hetty has fallen fainting from her chair.

CHAPTER XLV.

IN WHICH HARRY FINDS TWO UNCLES.



WE have all of us, no doubt, had a fine experience of the world, and a vast variety of characters have passed under our eyes; but there is one sort of men—not an uncommon object of satire in novels and plays—of whom I confess to have met with scarce any specimens at all in my intercourse with this sinful mankind. I mean, mere religious hypocrites, preaching for ever, and not believing a word of their own sermons; infidels in broad brims and sables, expounding, exhorting, comminating, blessing, without any faith in their own paradise, or fear about their pandemonium. Look at those candid troops of hobnails clumping to church on a Sunday evening; those rustling maid-servants in their ribbons whom the young apprentices follow; those little regiments of schoolboys; those trim young maidens and staid matrons, marching with their glistening prayer-books, as the chapel bell chinks yonder (passing Ebenezer, very likely, where the congregation of umbrellas, great bonnets, and pattens, is by this time assembled under the flaring gas-lamps). Look at those! How many of them are hypocrites, think you? Very likely the maid-servant is thinking of her sweetheart: the grocer is casting about how he can buy that parcel of sugar, and whether the County Bank will take any more of his paper: the head-schoolboy is conning Latin verses for Monday's exercise: the young scapegrace remembers that after this service and sermon, there will be papa's exposition at home, but that there will be pie for supper: the clerk who calls out the psalm has his daughter in trouble, and drones through his responses scarcely aware of their meaning: the very moment the parson hides his face on his cushion, he may be thinking of that bill which is coming due on Monday. These people are not heavenly-minded; they are of the world, worldly, and have not yet got their feet off of it; but they are not hypocrites, look you. Folks have their religion in some handy mental lock-up, as it were,—a valuable medicine, to be taken in ill health; and a man administers his nostrum to his neighbour, and recommends his private cure for the other's complaint. "My dear Madam, you have spasms? You will find these drops infallible!" "You have been taking too much wine, my good sir? By this pill you may defy any evil consequences from too much wine, and take your bottle of port daily." Of spiritual and bodily physic, who are more fond and eager dispensers than women? And we know that, especially a hundred years ago, every lady in the country had her still-room, and her medicine-chest, her pills, powders, potions, for all the village round.

My Lady Warrington took charge of the consciences and the digestions of her husband's tenants and family. She had the faith and health of the servants'-hall in keeping. Heaven can tell whether she knew how to doctor them rightly: but, was it pill or doctrine, she administered one or the other with equal belief in her own authority, and her disciples swallowed both obediently. She believed herself to be one of the most virtuous, self-denying, wise, learned women in the world; and, dinning this opinion perpetually into the ears of all round about her, succeeded in bringing not a few persons to join in her persuasion.

At Sir Miles's dinner there was so fine a side-board of plate, and such a number of men in livery, that it required some presence of mind to perceive that the beer was of the smallest which the butler brought round in the splendid tankard, and that there was but one joint of mutton on the grand silver dish. When Sir Miles called the King's health, and smacked his jolly lips over his wine, he eyed it and the company as if the liquor was ambrosia. He asked

Harry Warrington whether they had port like that in Virginia? He said that was nothing to the wine Harry should taste in Norfolk. He praised the wine so, that Harry almost believed that it was good, and winked into his own glass, trying to see some of the merits which his uncle perceived in the ruby nectar.

Just as we see in many a well-regulated family of this present century, the Warringtons had their two paragons. Of the two grown daughters, the one was the greatest beauty, the other the greatest genius and angel of any young lady then alive, as Lady Warrington told Harry. The eldest, the Beauty, was engaged to dear Tom Claypool, the fond mother informed her Cousin Harry in confidence. But the second daughter, the Genius and Angel, was for ever set upon our young friend to improve his wits and morals. She sang to him at the harpsichord—rather out of tune for an angel, Harry thought; she was ready with advice, instruction, conversation—with almost too much instruction and advice, thought Harry, who would have far preferred the society of the little cousin who reminded him of Fanny Mountain at home. But the last-mentioned young maiden after dinner retired to her nursery commonly. Beauty went off on her own avocations; Mamma had to attend to her poor or write her voluminous letters; Papa dozed in his arm-chair; and the Genius remained to keep her young cousin company.

The calm of the house somehow pleased the young man, and he liked to take refuge there away from the riot and dissipation in which he ordinarily lived. Certainly no welcome could be kinder than that which he got. The doors were opened to him at all hours. If Flora was not at home, Dora was ready to receive him. Ere many days' acquaintance, he and his little Cousin Miles had been to have a galloping-match in the Park, and Harry, who was kind and generous to every man alive who came near him, had in view the purchase of a little horse for his cousin, far better than that which the boy rode, when the circumstances occurred which brought all our poor Harry's coaches and horses to a sudden breakdown.

Though Sir Miles Warrington had imagined Virginia to be an island, the ladies were much better instructed in geography, and anxious to hear from Harry all about his home and his native country. He, on his part, was not averse to talk about it. He described to them the length and breadth of his estate; the rivers which it coasted; the produce which it bore. He had had with a friend a little practice of surveying in his boyhood. He made a map of his county, with some fine towns here and there, which, in truth, were but log-huts (but, for the honour of his country, he was desirous that they should wear as handsome a look as possible). Here was Potomac; here was James River; here were the wharves whence his mother's ships and tobacco were brought to the sea. In truth, the estate was as large as a county. He did not brag about the place overmuch. To see the handsome young fellow, in a fine suit of velvet and silver-lace, making his draught, pointing out this hill and that forest or town, you might have imagined him a travelling prince describing the realms of the queen his mother. He almost fancied himself to be so at times. He had miles where gentlemen in England had acres. Not only Dora listened, but the beauteous Flora bowed her fair head and heard him with attention. Why, what was young Tom Claypool, their brother baronet's son in Norfolk, with his great boots, his great voice, and his heirdom to a poor five thousand acres, compared to this young American prince and charming stranger? Angel as she was, Dora began to lose her angelic temper, and to twit Flora for a flirt. Claypool, in his red waistcoat, would sit dumb before the splendid Harry in his ruffles and laces, talking of March and Chesterfield, Selwyn and Bolingbroke, and the whole company of macaronis. Mamma began to love Harry more and more as a son. She was anxious about the spiritual welfare of those poor Indians, of those poor negroes in Virginia. What could she do to help dear Madam Esmond (a precious woman, she knew!) in the good work? She had a serious butler and housekeeper: they were delighted with the spiritual behaviour and sweet musical gifts of Gumbo.

"Ah! Harry, Harry! you have been a sad wild boy! Why did you not come sooner to us, sir, and not lose your time amongst the spendthrifts and the vain world? But 'tis not yet too late. We must reclaim thee, dear Harry! Mustn't we, Sir Miles? Mustn't we, Dora? Mustn't we, Flora?"

The three ladies all look up to the ceiling. They *will* reclaim the dear prodigal. It is which shall reclaim him most. Dora sits by and watches Flora. As for mamma, when the girls are away, she talks to him more and more seriously, more and more tenderly. She will be a mother to him in the absence of his own admirable parent.

She gives him a hymn-book. She kisses him on the forehead. She is actuated by the purest love, tenderness, religious regard, towards her dear, wayward, wild, amiable nephew.

While these sentimentalities were going on, it is to be presumed that Mr. Warrington kept his own counsel about his affairs out-of-doors, which we have seen were in the very worst condition. He who had been favoured by fortune for so many weeks was suddenly deserted by her, and a few days had served to kick down all his heap of winnings. Do we say that my Lord Castlewood, his own kinsman, had dealt unfairly by the young Virginian, and in the course of a couple of afternoons' closet practice had robbed him? We would insinuate nothing so disrespectful to his lordship's character; but he had won from Harry every shilling which properly belonged to him, and would have played him for his reversion, but that the young man flung up his hands when he saw himself so far beaten, and declared that he must continue the battle no more. Remembering that there still remained a spar out of the wreck, as it were—that portion which he had set aside for poor Sampson—Harry ventured it at the gaming-table; but that last resource went down along with the rest of Harry's possessions, and Fortune fluttered off in the storm, leaving the luckless adventurer almost naked on the shore.

When a man is young and generous and hearty the loss of money scarce afflicts him. Harry would sell his horses and carriages, and diminish his *train* of life. If he wanted immediate supplies of money, would not his Aunt Bernstein be his banker, or his kinsman who had won so much from him, or his kind Uncle Warrington and Lady Warrington who were always talking virtue and benevolence, and declaring that they loved him as a son? He would call upon these, or any one of them whom he might choose to favour, at his leisure; meanwhile, Sampson's story of his landlord's distress touched the young gentleman, and, in order to raise a hasty supply for the clergyman, he carried off all his trinkets to a certain pawnbroker's shop in St. Martin's Lane.

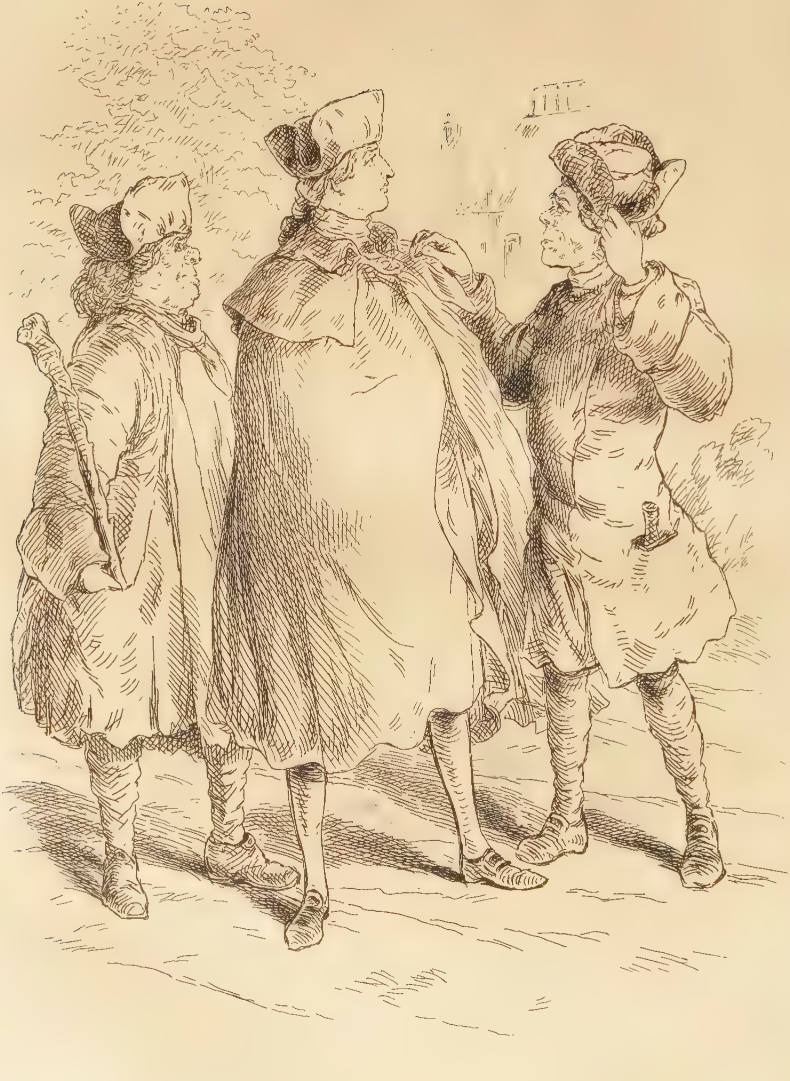
Now this broker was a relative or partner of that very Mr. Sparks of Tavistock Street from whom Harry had purchased—purchased did we say?—no; taken the trinkets which he had intended to present to his Oakhurst friends; and it chanced that Mr. Sparks came to visit his brother tradesman very soon after Mr. Warrington had disposed of his goods. Recognizing immediately the little enamelled diamond-handled repeater which he had sold to the Fortunate Youth, the jeweller broke out into expressions regarding Harry which I will not mention here, being already accused of speaking much too plainly. A gentleman who is acquainted with a pawnbroker, we may be sure has a bailiff or two amongst his acquaintances; and those bailiffs have followers who, at the bidding of the impartial Law, will touch with equal hand the fiercest captain's epaulet or the finest macaroni's shoulder. The very gentlemen who had seized upon Lady Maria at Tunbridge were set upon her cousin in London. They easily learned from the garrulous Gumbo that his honour was at Sir Miles Warrington's house in Hill Street, and whilst the black was courting Mrs. Lambert's maid at the adjoining mansion, Mr. Costigan and his assistant lay in wait for poor Harry, who was enjoying the delights of intercourse with a virtuous family-circle assembled round his aunt's table. Never had Uncle Miles been more cordial, never had Aunt Warrington been more gracious, gentle, and affectionate; Flora looked unusually lovely, Dora had been more than ordinarily amiable. At parting, my lady gave him both her hands, and called benedictions from the ceiling down upon him. Papa had said in his most jovial manner, "Hang it, nephew! when I was thy age I should have kissed two such fine girls as Do and Flo ere this, and my own flesh and blood too! Don't tell me! I *should*, my Lady Warrington! Odd's-fish! 'tis the boy blushes, and not the girls! I think —I suppose they are used to it. He, he!"

"Papa!" cry the virgins.

"Sir Miles!" says the august mother at the same instant.

"There, there!" says papa. "A kiss won't do no harm, and won't tell no tales, will it, Nephew Harry?" I suppose, during the utterance of the above three brief phrases, the harmless little osculatory operation has taken place, and blushing Cousin Harry has touched the damask cheek of Cousin Flora and Cousin Dora.

As he goes downstairs with his uncle, mamma makes a speech to the girls, looking, as usual, up to the ceiling, and saying, "What precious qualities your poor dear cousin has! What shrewdness mingled with his simplicity, and what a fine genteel manner, though upon mere worldly elegance I set little store. What a dreadful pity to think that such a vessel should ever be lost! We must rescue him, my loves. We must take him away from those wicked



A PAIR OF OLD ACQUAINTANCES

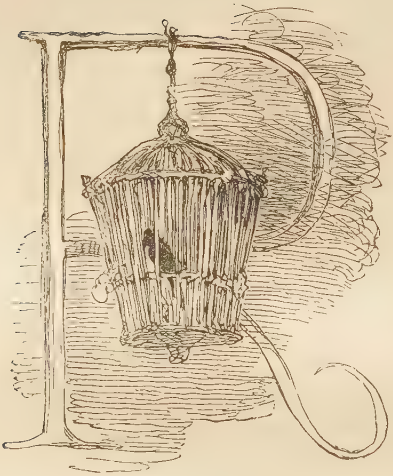
companions, and those horrible Castlewoods—not that I would speak ill of my neighbours. But I shall hope, I shall pray, that he may be rescued from his evil courses!" And again Lady Warrington eyes the cornice in a most determined manner, as the girls wistfully look towards the door behind which their interesting cousin has just vanished.

His uncle will go downstairs with him. He calls, "God bless you, my boy!" most affectionately: he presses Harry's hand, and repeats his valuable benediction at the door. As it closes, the light from the hall within having sufficiently illuminated Mr. Warrington's face and figure, two gentlemen, who have been standing on the opposite side of the way, advance rapidly, and one of them takes a strip of paper out of his pocket, and putting his hand upon Mr. Warrington's shoulder, declares him his prisoner. A hackney-coach is in attendance, and poor Harry goes to sleep in Chancery Lane.

Oh, to think that a Virginian prince's back should be slapped by a ragged bailiff's follower!—that Madam Esmond's son should be in a sponging-house in Cursitor Street! I do not envy our young prodigal his rest on that dismal night. Let us hit him now he is down, my beloved young friends. Let us imagine the stings of remorse keeping him wakeful on his dingy pillow; the horrid jollifications of other hardened inmates of the place ringing in his ears from the room hard by, where they sit boozing; the rage and shame and discomfiture. No pity on him, I say, my honest young gentlemen, for *you*, of course, have never indulged in extravagance or folly, or paid the reckoning of remorse.

CHAPTER XLVI.

CHAINS AND SLAVERY.



REMORSE for past misdeeds and follies Harry sincerely felt, when he found himself a prisoner in that dismal lock-up house, and wrath and annoyance at the idea of being subjected to the indignity of arrest; but the present unpleasantry he felt sure could only be momentary. He had twenty friends who would release him from his confinement: to which of them should he apply, was the question. Mr. Draper, the man of business, who had been so obsequious to him: his kind uncle the baronet, who had offered to make his house Harry's home, who loved him as a son: his Cousin Castlewood, who had won such large sums from him: his noble friends at the Chocolate House, his good Aunt Bernstein—any of these Harry felt sure would give him a help in his trouble, though some of the relatives, perhaps, might administer to him a little scolding for his imprudence. The main point was, that the matter should be transacted quietly, for Mr. Warrington was anxious that as few as possible of the public should know how a gentleman of his prodigious importance had been subject to such a vulgar process as an arrest.

"A pretty sensation my arrest must have created at the club!" thought Harry. "I suppose that Mr. Selwyn will be cutting all sorts of jokes about my misfortune, plague take him! Everybody round the table will have heard of it. March will tremble about the bet I have with him; and, faith, 'twill be difficult to pay him when I lose.

They will all be setting up a whoop of congratulation at the Savage, as they call me, being taken prisoner. How shall I ever be able to appear in the world again? Whom shall I ask to come to my help? No," thought he, with his mingled acuteness and simplicity, "I will not send in the first instance to any of my relations or my noble friends at White's. I will have Sampson's counsel. He has often been in a similar predicament, and will know how to advise me." Accordingly, as soon as the light of dawn appeared, after an almost intolerable delay—for it seemed to Harry as if the sun had forgotten to visit Cursitor Street in his rounds that morning—and as soon as the inmates of the house of bondage were stirring, Mr. Warrington despatched a messenger to his friend in Long Acre, acquainting the Chaplain with the calamity just befallen him, and beseeching his Reverence to give him the benefit of his advice and consolation.

Mr. Warrington did not know, to be sure, that to send such a message to the parson was as if he said, "I am fallen amongst the lions. Come down, my dear friend, into the pit with me." Harry very likely thought Sampson's difficulties were over; or, more likely still, was so much engrossed with his own affairs and perplexities, as to bestow little thought upon his neighbour's. Having sent off his missive the captive's mind was somewhat more at ease, and he condescended to call for breakfast, which was brought to him presently. The attendant who served him with his morning repast, asked him whether he would order dinner, or take his meal at Mrs. Bailiff's table with some other gentlemen? No. Mr. Warrington would not order dinner. He should quit the place before dinner-time, he informed the chamberlain who waited on him in that grim tavern. The man went away, thinking no doubt that this was not the first young gentleman who had announced that he was going away ere two hours were over. "Well, if your honour *does* stay, there is good beef and carrot at two o'clock," says the sceptic, and closes the door on Mr. Harry and his solitary meditations.

Harry's messenger to Mr. Sampson brought back a message from that gentleman to say that he would be with his patron as soon as might be: but ten o'clock came, eleven o'clock, noon, and no Sampson. No Sampson arrived, but about twelve Gumbo with a portmanteau of his master's clothes, who flung himself, roaring with grief, at Harry's feet: and with a thousand vows of fidelity, expressed himself ready to die, to sell himself into slavery over again, to do anything to rescue his beloved Master Harry from this calamitous position. Harry was touched with the lad's expressions of affection, and told him to get up from the ground where he was grovelling on his knees, embracing his master's. "All you have to do, sir, is to give me my clothes to dress, and to hold your tongue about this business. Mind you, not a word, sir, about it to anybody!" says Mr. Warrington, severely.

"Oh, no, sir, never to nobody!" says Gumbo, looking most solemnly, and proceeded to dress his master carefully, who had need of a change and a toilette after his yesterday's sudden capture, and night's dismal rest. Accordingly Gumbo flung a dash of powder in Harry's hair, and arrayed his master carefully and elegantly, so that he made Mr. Warrington look as fine and splendid as if he had been stepping into his chair to go to St. James's.

Indeed all that love and servility could do Mr. Gumbo faithfully did for his master, for whom he had an extreme regard and attachment. But there were certain things beyond Gumbo's power. He could not undo things which were done already; and he could not help lying and excusing himself when pressed upon points disagreeable to himself.

As for swearing not to say a word about his master's arrest—such an oath as that was impossible to keep: for, with a heart full of grief indeed, but with a tongue that never could cease wagging, bragging, joking, and lying, Mr. Gumbo had announced the woeful circumstance to a prodigious number of his acquaintances already, chiefly gentlemen of the shoulder-knot and worsted lace. We have seen how he carried the news to Colonel Lambert's and Lord Wrotham's servants: he had proclaimed it at the footman's club to which he belonged, and which was frequented by the gentlemen of some of the first nobility. He had subsequently condescended to partake of a mug of ale in Sir Miles Warrington's butler's room, and there had repeated and embellished the story. Then he had gone off to Madame Bernstein's people, with some of whom he was on terms of affectionate intercourse, and had informed that domestic circle of his grief: and, his master being captured, and there being no earthly call for his personal services that evening, Gumbo had stepped up to Lord Castlewood's, and informed the gentry there of the incident which had just come to pass. So when, laying his hand on his heart, and with gushing floods of tears, Gumbo says, in reply to his master's injunction, "Oh, no, master! nebber to nobody!" we are in a condition to judge of the degree of credibility which ought to be given to the lad's statement.

The black had long completed his master's toilet: the dreary breakfast was over: slow as the hours went to the prisoner, still they were passing one after another, but no Sampson came in accordance with the promise sent in the morning. At length, some time after noon, there arrived, not Sampson, but a billet from him, sealed with a moist wafer, and with the ink almost yet wet. The unlucky divine's letter ran as follows:

> "Oh, sir, dear sir, I have done all that a man can at the command and in the behalf of his patron! You did not know, sir, to what you were subjecting me, did you? Else, if I was to go to prison, why did I not share yours, and why am I in a lock-up house three doors off?
>
> "Yes. Such is the fact. As I was hastening to you, knowing full well the danger to which I was subject:—but what danger will I not affront at the call of such a benefactor as Mr. Warrington hath been to me?—I was seized by two villains who had a writ against me, and who have lodged me at Naboth's hard by, and so close to your honour, that we could almost hear each other across the garden-walls of the respective houses where we are confined.
>
> "I had much and of importance to say, which I do not care to write down in paper, regarding your affairs. May they mend! May my cursed fortunes, too, better themselves, is the prayer of
>
> "Your honour's afflicted Chaplain in Ordinary,
>
> "T. S."

And now, as Mr. Sampson refuses to speak, it will be our duty to acquaint the reader with those matters whereof the poor Chaplain did not care to discourse on paper.

Gumbo's loquacity had not reached so far as Long Acre, and Mr. Sampson was ignorant of the extent of his patron's calamity until he received Harry's letter and messenger from Chancery Lane. The divine was still ardent with gratitude for the service Mr. Warrington had just conferred on him, and eager to find some means to succour his distressed patron. He knew what a large sum Lord Castlewood had won from his cousin, had dined in company with his lordship on the day before, and now ran to Lord Castlewood's house, with a hope of arousing him to some pity for Mr. Warrington. Sampson made a very eloquent and touching speech to Lord Castlewood about his kinsman's misfortune, and spoke with a real kindness and sympathy, which, however, failed to touch the nobleman to whom he addressed himself.

My lord peevishly and curtly put a stop to the Chaplain's passionate pleading. "Did I not tell you, two days since, when you came for money, that I was as poor as a beggar, Sampson," said his lordship, "and has anybody left me a fortune since? The little sum I won from my cousin was swallowed up by others. I not only can't help Mr. Warrington, but, as I pledge you my word, not being in the least aware of his calamity, I had positively written to him this morning to ask him to help *me*." And a letter to this effect did actually reach Mr. Warrington from his lodgings, whither it had been despatched by the penny-post.

"I must get him money, my lord. I know he had scarcely anything left in his pocket after relieving me. Were I to pawn my cassock and bands, he must have money," cried the Chaplain.

"Amen. Go and pawn your bands, your cassock, anything you please. Your enthusiasm does you credit," said my lord; and resumed the reading of his paper, whilst, in the deepest despondency, poor Sampson left him.

My Lady Maria meanwhile had heard that the Chaplain was with her brother, and conjectured what might be the subject on which they had been talking. She seized upon the parson as he issued from out his fruitless interview with my lord. She drew him into the dining-room: the strongest marks of grief and sympathy were in her countenance. "Tell me, what is this has happened to Mr. Warrington?" she asked.

"Your ladyship, then, knows?" asked the Chaplain.

"Have I not been in mortal anxiety ever since his servant brought the dreadful news last night?" asked my lady. "We had it as we came from the opera—from my Lady Yarmouth's box—my lord, my Lady Castlewood, and I."

"His lordship, then, *did* know?" continued Sampson.

"Benson told the news when we came from the playhouse to our tea," repeats Lady Maria.

The Chaplain lost all patience and temper at such duplicity. "This is too bad," he said, with an oath; and he told Lady Maria of the conversation which he had just had with Lord Castlewood, and of the latter's refusal to succour his cousin, after winning great sums of money from him, and with much eloquence and feeling, of Mr. Warrington's most generous behaviour to himself.

Then my Lady Maria broke out with a series of remarks regarding her own family, which were by no means complimentary to her own kith and kin. Although not accustomed to tell truth commonly, yet, when certain families fall out, it is wonderful what a number of truths they will tell about one another. With tears, imprecations, I do not like to think how much stronger language, Lady Maria burst into a furious and impassioned tirade, in which she touched upon the history of almost all her noble family. She complimented the men and the ladies alike; she shrieked out interrogatories to heaven, inquiring why it had made such—— (never mind what names she called her brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, parents); and, emboldened with wrath, she dashed at her brother's library-door, so shrill in her outcries, so furious in her demeanour, that the alarmed Chaplain, fearing the scene which might ensue, made for the street.

My lord, looking up from the book or other occupation which engaged him, regarded the furious woman with some surprise, and selected a good strong oath to fling at her, as it were, and check her onset.

But, when roused, we have seen how courageous Maria could be. Afraid as she was ordinarily of her brother, she was not in a mood to be frightened now by any language of abuse or sarcasm at his command.

"So, my lord!" she called out; "you sit down with him in private to cards, and pigeon him! You get the poor boy's last shilling, and you won't give him a guinea out of his own winnings now he is penniless!"

"So that infernal Chaplain has been telling tales!" says my lord.

"Dismiss him: do! Pay him his wages, and let him go,—he will be glad enough!" cries Maria.

"I keep him to marry one of my sisters, in case he is wanted," says Castlewood, glaring at her.

"What can the women be in a family where there are such men?" says the lady.

"Effectivement!" says my lord, with a shrug of his shoulder.

"What can we be, when our fathers and brothers are what they are? We are bad enough, but what are you? I say, you neither have courage—no, nor honour, nor common feeling. As your equals won't play with you, my Lord Castlewood, you must take this poor lad out of Virginia, your own kinsman, and pigeon him! Oh, it's a shame—a shame!"

"We are all playing our own game, I suppose. Haven't you played and won one, Maria? Is it you that are squeamish all of a sudden about the poor lad from Virginia? Has Mr. Harry cried off, or has your ladyship got a better offer?" cried my lord. "If you won't have him, one of the Warrington girls will, I promise you; and the old Methodist woman in Hill Street will give him the choice of either. Are you a fool, Maria Esmond? A greater fool, I mean, than in common?"

"I should be a fool if I thought that either of my brothers could act like an honest man, Eugene!" said Maria. "I am a fool to expect that you will be other than you are; that if you find any relative in distress you will help him; that if you can meet with a victim you won't fleece him."

"Fleece him! Psha! What folly are you talking! Have you not seen, from the course which the lad has been running for months past, how he would end? If I had not won his money, some other would? I never grudged thee thy little plans regarding him. Why shouldst thou fly in a passion, because I have just put out my hand to take what he was offering to all the world? I reason with you, I don't know why, Maria. You should be old enough to understand reason, at any rate. You think this money belonged of right to Lady Maria Warrington and her children? I tell you that in three months more every shilling would have found its way to White's macco-table, and that it is much better spent in paying my debts. So much for your ladyship's anger, and tears, and menaces, and naughty language. See! I am a good brother, and repay them with reason and kind words."

"My good brother might have given a little more than kind words to the lad from whom he has just taken hundreds," interposed the sister of this affectionate brother.

"Great heavens, Maria! Don't you see that even out of this affair, unpleasant as it seems, a clever woman may make her advantage," cries my lord. Maria said she failed to comprehend.

"As thus. I name no names; I meddle in no person's business, having quite enough to do to manage my own cursed affairs. But suppose I happen to know of a case in another family which may be applicable to ours. It is this. A green young lad of tolerable expectations, comes up from the country to his friends in town—never mind from what country; never mind to what town. An elderly female relative, who has been dragging her spinsterhood about these—how many years shall we say?—extorts a promise of marriage from my young gentleman, never mind on what conditions."

"My lord, do you want to insult your sister as well as to injure your cousin?" asks Maria.

"My good child, did I say a single word about fleecing or cheating, or pigeoning, or did I fly into a passion when you insulted *me?* I know the allowance that must be made for your temper, and the natural folly of your sex. I say I treated you with soft words—I go on with my story. The elderly relative extracts a promise of marriage from the young lad, which my gentleman is quite unwilling to keep. No, he won't keep it. He is utterly tired of his elderly relative; he will plead his mother's refusal: he will do anything to get out of his promise."

"Yes; if he was one of us Esmonds, my Lord Castlewood. But this is a man of honour we are speaking of," cried Maria, who, I suppose, admired truth in others, however little she saw it in her own family.

"I do not contradict either of my dear sister's remarks. One of us would fling the promise to the winds, especially as it does not exist in writing."

"My lord!" gasps out Maria.

"Bah! I know all. That little *coup* of Tunbridge was played by the Aunt Bernstein with excellent skill. The old woman is the best man of our family. While you were arrested, your boxes were searched for the Mohock's letters to you. When you were let loose, the letters had disappeared, and you said nothing, like a wise woman, as you are sometimes. You still hanker after your Cherokee. *Soit.* A woman of your mature experience knows the value of a husband. What is this little loss of two or three hundred pounds?"

"Not more than three hundred, my lord?" interposes Maria.

"Eh! never mind a hundred or two, more or less. What is this loss at cards? A mere bagatelle! You are playing for a principality. You want your kingdom in Virginia; and if you listen to my opinion, the little misfortune which has happened to your swain is a piece of great good fortune to you."

"I don't understand you, my lord."

"*C'est possible;* but sit down, and I will explain what I mean in a manner suited to your capacity." And so Maria Esmond, who had advanced to her brother like a raging lion, now sat down at his feet like a gentle lamb.

Madame de Bernstein was not a little moved at the news of her nephew's arrest, which Mr. Gumbo brought to Clarges Street on the night of the calamity. She would have cross-examined the black, and had further particulars respecting Harry's mishap: but Mr. Gumbo, anxious to carry his intelligence to other quarters, had vanished when her ladyship sent for him. Her temper was not improved by the news, or by the sleepless night which she spent. I do not envy the *dame de compagnie* who played cards with her, or the servant who had to lie in her chamber. An arrest was an everyday occurrence, as she knew very well as a woman of the world. Into what difficulties had her scapegrace of a nephew fallen? How much money should she be called upon to pay to release him? And had he run through all his own? Provided he had not committed himself very deeply, she was quite disposed to aid him. She liked even his extravagances and follies. He was the only being in the world on whom, for long, long years, that weary woman had been able to bestow a little natural affection. So, on their different beds, she and Harry were lying wakeful together; and quite early in the morning the messengers which each sent forth on the same business may have crossed each other.

Madame Bernstein's messenger was despatched to the chambers of her man of business, Mr. Draper, with an order that Mr. D. should ascertain for what sums Mr. Warrington had been arrested, and forthwith repair to the Baroness. Draper's emissaries speedily found out that Mr. Warrington was locked up close beside them, and the amount of detainers against him so far. Were there other creditors, as no doubt there were, they would certainly close upon him when they were made acquainted with his imprisonment.

To Mr. Sparks, the jeweller, for those unlucky presents, so much; to the landlord in Bond Street, for board, fire, lodging, so much: these were at present the only claims against Mr. Warrington, Mr. Draper found. He was ready, at a signal from her ladyship, to settle them at a moment. The jeweller's account ought especially to be paid, for Mr. Harry had acted most imprudently in taking goods from Mr. Sparks on credit, and pledging them with a pawnbroker. He must have been under some immediate pressure for money;

intended to redeem the goods immediately, meant nothing but what was honourable of course; but the affair would have an ugly look, if made public, and had better be settled out of hand. "There cannot be the least difficulty regarding a thousand pounds more or less, for a gentleman of Mr. Warrington's rank and expectations," said Madame de Bernstein. Not the least: her ladyship knew very well that there were funds belonging to Mr. Warrington, on which money could be at once raised with her ladyship's guarantee.

Should he go that instant and settle the matter with Messrs. Amos? Mr. Harry might be back to dine with her at two, and to confound the people at the clubs, "who are no doubt rejoicing over his misfortunes," said the compassionate Mr. Draper.

But the Baroness had other views. "I think, my good Mr. Draper," she said, "that my young gentleman has sown wild oats enough; and when he comes out of prison I should like him to come out clear, and without any liabilities at all. You are not aware of all his."

"No gentleman ever does tell all his debts, Madame," says Mr. Draper; "no one *I* ever had to deal with."

"There is one which the silly boy has contracted, and from which he ought to be released, Mr. Draper. You remember a little circumstance which occurred at Tunbridge Wells in the autumn? About which I sent up my man Case to you?"

"When your ladyship pleases to recall it, I remember it—not otherwise," says Mr. Draper, with a bow. "A lawyer should be like a Popish confessor,—what is told him is a secret for ever, and for everybody." So we must not whisper Madame Bernstein's secret to Mr. Draper; but the reader may perhaps guess it from the lawyer's conduct subsequently.

The lawyer felt pretty certain that ere long he would receive a summons from the poor young prisoner in Cursitor Street, and waited for that invitation before he visited Mr. Warrington. Six-and-thirty hours passed ere the invitation came, during which period Harry passed the dreariest two days which he ever remembered to have spent.

There was no want of company in the lock-up house, the bailiff's rooms were nearly always full; but Harry preferred the dingy solitude of his own room to the society round his lady's table, and it was only on the second day of his arrest, and when his purse was emptied by the heavy charges of the place, that he made up his mind to apply to Mr. Draper. He despatched a letter then to the lawyer at the Temple, informing him of his plight, and desiring him, in an emphatic postscript, not to say one word about the matter to his aunt, Madame de Bernstein.

He had made up his mind not to apply to the old lady except at the very last extremity. She had treated him with so much kindness, that he revolted from the notion of trespassing on her bounty, and for a while tried to please himself with the idea that he might get out of durance without her even knowing that any misfortune at all had befallen him. There seemed to him something humiliating in petitioning a woman for money. No! He would apply first to his male friends, all of whom might help him if they would. It had been his intention to send Sampson to one or other of them as a negotiator, had not the poor fellow been captured on his way to succour his friend.

Sampson gone, Harry was obliged to have recourse to his own negro servant, who was kept on the trot all day between Temple Bar and the Court end of the town with letters from his unlucky master. Firstly, then, Harry sent off a most private and confidential letter to his kinsman, the Right Honourable the Earl of Castlewood, saying how he had been cast into prison, and begging Castlewood to lend him the amount of the debt. "Please to keep my application, and the cause of it, a profound secret from the dear ladies," wrote poor Harry.

"Was ever anything so unfortunate?" wrote back Lord Castlewood, in reply. "I suppose you have not got my note of yesterday? It must be lying at your lodgings, where—I hope in heaven!—you will soon be, too. My dear Mr. Warrington, thinking you were as rich as Crœsus—otherwise I should never have sat down to cards with you—I wrote to you yesterday, begging you to lend *me* some money to appease some hungry duns whom I don't know how else to pacify. My poor fellow, every shilling of your money went to them, and but for my peer's privilege I might be hob-and-nob with you now in your dungeon. May you soon escape from it, is the prayer of your sincere Castlewood."

This was the result of application number one: and we may imagine that Mr. Harry read the reply to his petition with rather a blank face. Never mind! There was kind, jolly Uncle Warrington.

Only last night his aunt had kissed him, and loved him like a son. His uncle had called down blessings on his head, and professed quite a paternal regard for him. With a feeling of shyness and modesty in presence of those virtuous parents and family, Harry had never said a word about his wild doings, or his horse-racings, or his gamblings, or his extravagances. It must all out now. He must confess himself a Prodigal and a Sinner, and ask for their forgiveness and aid. So Prodigal sat down and composed a penitent letter to Uncle Warrington, and exposed his sad case, and besought him to come to the rescue. Was not that a bitter nut to crack for our haughty young Virginian? Hours of mortification and profound thought as to the pathos of the composition did Harry pass over that letter; sheet after sheet of Mr. Amos's sixpence a sheet letter-paper did he tear up before the missive was complete, with which poor blubbering Gumbo (much vilified by the bailiff's followers and parasites, whom he was robbing, as they conceived, of their perquisites) went his way.

At evening the faithful negro brought back a thick letter in his aunt's handwriting. Harry opened the letter with a trembling hand. He thought it was full of bank-notes. Ah, me! it contained a sermon (Daniel in the Lions' Den) by Mr. Whitfield, and a letter from Lady Warrington saying that, in Sir Miles's absence from London, she was in the habit of opening his letters, and hence, perforce, was become acquainted with a fact which she *deplored from her inmost soul* to learn, namely, that her nephew Warrington had been *extravagant and was in debt.* Of course, in the absence of Sir Miles, she could not hope to have at command such a sum as that for which Mr. Warrington wrote, but she sent him her *heartfelt prayers*, her *deepest commiseration*, and a discourse by dear Mr. Whitfield, which would comfort him in his present (alas! she feared not undeserved) calamity. She added profuse references to particular Scriptural chapters which would do him good. If she might speak of things worldly she said at *such a moment*, she would hint to Mr. Warrington that his epistolary orthography was anything but correct. She would not fail for her part to comply with his express desire that his *dear cousins* should know nothing of this most *painful circumstance*, and with every wish for his welfare here and elsewhere, she subscribed herself his loving aunt,

MARGARET WARRINGTON.

Poor Harry hid his face between his hands, and sat for a while with elbows on the greasy table blankly staring into the candle before him. The bailiff's servant, who was touched by his handsome face suggested a mug of beer for his honour, but Harry could not drink, nor eat the meat that was placed before him. Gumbo, however, could, whose grief did not deprive him of appetite, and who, blubbering the while, finished all the beer, and all the bread and the meat. Meanwhile, Harry had finished another letter, with which Gumbo was commissioned to start again, and away the faithful creature ran upon his errand.

Gumbo ran as far as White's Club, to which house he was ordered in the first instance to carry the letter, and where he found the person to whom it was addressed. Even the prisoner, for whom time passed so slowly, was surprised at the celerity with which his negro had performed his errand.

At least the letter which Harry expected had not taken long to write. "My lord wrote it at the hall-porter's desk, while I stood there then with Mr. Morris," said Gumbo, and the letter was to this effect:—

"DEAR SIR,—I am sorry I cannot comply with your wish, as I'm short of money at present, having paid large sums to you as well as to other gentlemen.

"Yours obediently,

"MARCH and R.

"Henry Warrington, Esq."

"Did Lord March say anything?" asked Mr. Warrington, looking very pale.

"He say it was the coolest thing he ever knew. So did Mr. Morris. He showed him your letter, Master Harry. Yes, and Mr. Morris say, 'Dam his imperence!'" added Gumbo.

Harry burst into such a yell of laughter that his landlord thought he had good news, and ran in in alarm lest he was about to lose his tenant. But by this time poor Harry's laughter was over, and he was flung down in his chair gazing dismally in the fire.

"I—I should like to smoke a pipe of Virginia," he groaned.

Gumbo burst into tears: he flung himself at Harry's knees. He kissed his knees and his hands. "Oh, master, my dear master, what will they say at home?" he sobbed out.

The jailor was touched at the sight of the black's grief and fidelity and at Harry's pale face as he sank back in his chair, quite overcome and beaten by his calamity.

"Your honour ain't eat anything these two days," the man said, in a voice of rough pity. "Pluck up a little, sir. You aren't the first gentleman who has been in and out of grief before this. Let me go down and get you a glass of punch and a little supper."

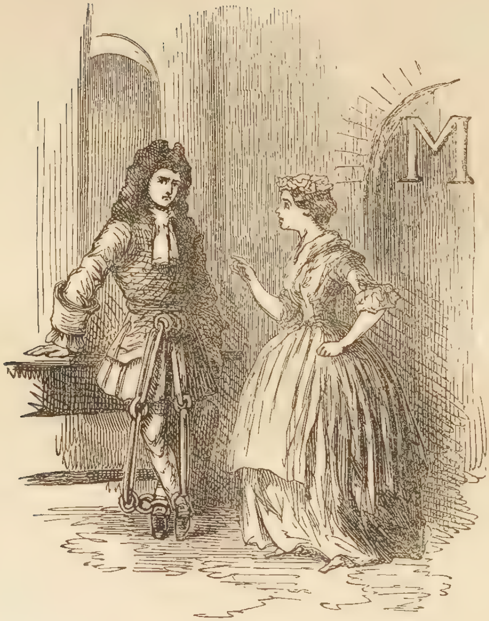
"My good friend," said Harry, a sickly smile playing over his white face, "you pay ready money for everything in this house, don't you? I must tell you that I haven't a shilling left to buy a dish of meat. All the money I have I want for letter-paper."

"Oh, master, my master!" roared out Gumbo. "Look here, my dear Master Harry! Here's plenty of money—here's twenty-three five-guineas. Here's gold moidore from Virginia—here—no, not that—that's keepsakes the girls gave me. Take everything—everything. I go sell myself to-morrow morning; but here's plenty for to-night, master!"

"God bless you, Gumbo!" Harry said, laying his hand on the lad's woolly head. "You are free if I am not, and heaven forbid I should not take the offered help of such a friend as you. Bring me some supper: but the pipe too, mind—the pipe too!" And Harry ate his supper with a relish: and even the turnkeys and bailiff's followers, when Gumbo went out of the house that night, shook hands with him, and ever after treated him well.

CHAPTER XLVII.

VISITORS IN TROUBLE.



MR. GUMBO'S generous and feeling conduct soothed and softened the angry heart of his master, and Harry's second night in the sponging-house was passed more pleasantly than the first. Somebody at least there was to help and compassionate with him. Still, though softened in that one particular spot, Harry's heart was hard and proud towards almost all the rest of the world. They were selfish and ungenerous, he thought. His pious Aunt Warrington, his lordly friend March, his cynical cousin Castlewood,—all had been tried, and were found wanting. Not to avoid twenty years of prison would he stoop to ask a favour of one of them again. Fool that he had been, to believe in their promises, and confide in their friendship! There was no friendship in this cursed, cold, selfish country. He would leave it. He would trust no Englishman, great or small. He would go to Germany, and make a campaign with the king; or he would go home to Virginia, bury himself in the woods there, and hunt all day; become his mother's factor and land-steward; marry Polly Broadbent, or Fanny Mountain; turn regular tobacco-grower and farmer; do anything, rather than remain amongst these English fine gentlemen. So he arose with an outwardly cheerful countenance, but an angry spirit; and at an early hour in the morning the faithful Gumbo was in attendance in his master's chamber, having come from Bond Street, and brought Mr. Harry's letters thence. "I wanted to bring some more clothes," honest Gumbo said; "but Mr. Ruff, the landlord, he wouldn't let me bring no more."

Harry did not care to look at the letters: he opened one, two, three; they were all bills. He opened a fourth; it was from the landlord, to say that he would allow no more of Mr. Warrington's things to go out of the house,—that unless his bill was paid he should sell Mr. W.'s goods and pay himself; and that his black man must go and sleep elsewhere. He would hardly let Gumbo take his own clothes and portmanteau away. The black said he had found refuge elsewhere — with some friends at Lord Wrotham's house. "With Colonel Lambert's people," says Mr. Gumbo, looking very hard at his master. "And Miss Hetty she fall down in a faint, when she hear you taken up; and Mr. Lambert, he very good man, and he say to me this morning, he say, 'Gumbo, you tell your master if he want me he send to me, and I come to him.'"

Harry was touched when he heard that Hetty had been afflicted by his misfortune. He did not believe Gumbo's story about her fainting; he was accustomed to translate his black's language and to allow for exaggeration. But when Gumbo spoke of the Colonel the young Virginian's spirit was darkened again. "*I* send to Lambert," he thought, grinding his teeth, "the man who insulted me, and flung my presents back in my face! If I were starving I would not ask him for a crust!" And presently, being dressed, Mr. Warrington called for his breakfast, and despatched Gumbo with a brief note to Mr. Draper in the Temple requiring that gentleman's attendance.

"The note was as haughty as if he was writing to one of his negroes, and not to a free-born English gentleman," Draper said; whom indeed Harry had always treated with insufferable condescension. "It's all very well for a fine gentleman to give himself airs; but for a fellow in a sponging-house! Hang him!" says Draper, "I've a great mind not to go!" Nevertheless, Mr. Draper did go, and found Mr. Warrington in his misfortune even more arrogant than he had ever been in the days of his utmost prosperity. Mr. W. sat on his bed, like a lord, in a splendid gown with his hair dressed. He motioned his black man to fetch him a chair.

"Excuse me, Madam, but such haughtiness and airs I ain't accustomed to!" said the outraged attorney.

"Take a chair and go on with your story, my good Mr. Draper!" said Madame de Bernstein, smiling, to whom he went to report proceedings. She was amused at the lawyer's anger. She liked her nephew for being insolent in adversity.

The course which Draper was to pursue in his interview with Harry had been arranged between the Baroness and her man of business on the previous day. Draper was an able man, and likely in most cases to do a client good service: he failed in the present instance because he was piqued and angry, or, more likely still, because he could not understand the gentleman with whom he had to deal. I presume that he who casts his eye on the present page is the most gentle of readers. Gentleman, as you unquestionably are then, my dear sir, have you not remarked in your dealings with people who are no gentlemen, that you offend them not knowing the how or the why? So the man who is no gentleman offends you in a thousand ways of which the poor creature has no idea himself. He does or says something which provokes your scorn. He perceives that scorn (being always on the watch, and uneasy about himself, his manners and behaviour) and he rages. You speak to him naturally, and he fancies still that you are sneering at him. You have indifference towards him, but he hates *you* and hates you the worse because you don't care. "Gumbo, a chair to Mr. Draper!" says Mr. Warrington, folding his brocaded dressing-grown round his legs as he sits on the dingy bed. "Sit down, if you please, and let us talk my business over. Much obliged to you for coming so soon in reply to my message. Had you heard of this piece of ill luck before?"

Mr. Draper had heard of the circumstance. "Bad news travel quick, Mr. Warrington," he said; "and I was eager to offer my humble services as soon as ever you should require them. Your friends, your family, will be much pained that a gentleman of your rank should be in such a position."

"I have been very imprudent, Mr. Draper. I have lived beyond my means." (Mr. Draper bowed.) "I played in company with gentlemen who were much richer than myself, and a cursed run of ill luck has carried away all my ready-money, leaving me with liabilities to the amount of five hundred pounds, and more."

"Five hundred now in the office," says Mr. Draper.

"Well, this is such a trifle that I thought by sending to one or two friends, yesterday, I could have paid my debt and gone home without farther to do. I have been mistaken; and will thank you to have the kindness to put me in the way of raising the money, as soon as may be."

Mr. Draper said "Hm!" and pulled a very grave and long face.

"Why, sir, it can be done!" says Mr. Warrington, staring at the lawyer.

It not only could be done, but Mr. Draper had proposed to Madame Bernstein on the day before instantly to pay the money, and release Mr. Warrington. That lady had declared she intended to make the young gentleman her heir. In common with the rest of the world, Draper believed Harry's hereditary property in Virginia to be as great in money-value as in extent. He had notes in his pockets, and Madam Bernstein's order to pay them under certain conditions: nevertheless, when Harry said, "It can be done!" Draper pulled his long face, and said, "It can be done in time, sir; but it will require a considerable time. To touch the property in England which is yours on Mr. George Warrington's death we must have the event proved, the trustees released: and who is to do either? Lady Esmond Warrington in Virginia, of course, will not allow her son to remain in prison, but we must wait six months before we hear from her. Has your Bristol agent any authority to honour your drafts?"

"He is only authorised to pay me two hundred pounds a year," says Mr. Warrington. "I suppose I have no resource, then, but to apply to my aunt, Madame de Bernstein? She will be my security."

"Her ladyship will do anything for you, sir; she has said so to me, often and often," said the lawyer; "and, if she gives the word, at that moment you can walk out of this place."

"Go to her, then, from me, Mr. Draper. I did not want to have troubled my relations: but rather than continue in this horrible needless imprisonment, I must speak to her. Say where I am, and what has befallen me. Disguise nothing! And tell her, that I confide in her affection and kindness for me to release me from this—this disgrace," and Mr. Warrington's voice shook a little, and he passed his hand across his eyes.

"Sir," says Mr. Draper, eyeing the young man, "I was with her ladyship yesterday, when we talked over the whole of this here most unpleasant—I won't say as you do, disgraceful business."

"What do you mean, sir? Does Madame de Bernstein know of my misfortune?" asked Harry.

"Every circumstance, sir; the pawning the watches, and all."

Harry turned burning red. "It is an unfortunate business, the pawning them watches and things which you had never paid for," continued the lawyer. The young man started up from the bed, looking so fierce that Draper felt a little alarmed.

"It may lead to litigation and unpleasant remarks being made in court, sir. Them barristers respect nothing; and when they get a feller in the box——"

"Great heaven, sir, you don't suppose a gentleman of my rank can't take a watch upon credit without intending to cheat the tradesman?" cried Harry, in the greatest agitation.

"Of course you meant everything that's honourable; only, you see, the law mayn't happen to think so," says Mr. Draper, winking his eye. "(Hang the supercilious beast! I touch him there!) Your aunt says it 's the most imprudent thing ever she heard of—to call it by no *worse* name."

"You call it by no worse name yourself, Mr. Draper?" says Harry, speaking each word very slow, and evidently trying to keep a command of himself.

Draper did not like his looks. "Heaven forbid that I should say anything as between gentleman and gentleman,—but between me and my client, it 's my duty to say, 'Sir, you are in a very unpleasant scrape,' just as a doctor would have to tell his patient, 'Sir, you are very ill.'"

"And you can't help me to pay this debt off,—and you have come only to tell me that I may be accused of roguery?" says Harry.

"Of obtaining goods under false pretences? Most undoubtedly, yes. I can't help it, sir. Don't look as if you would knock me down. (Curse him, I am making him wince, though.) A young gentleman, who has only two hundred a year from his Ma', orders diamonds and watches, and takes 'em to a pawnbroker. You ask me what people will think of such behaviour, and I tell you honestly. Don't be angry with *me*, Mr. Warrington."

"Go on, sir!" says Harry, with a groan.

The lawyer thought the day was his own. "But you ask if I can't help to pay this debt off? And I say Yes—and that here is the money in my pocket to do it now, if you like—not mine, sir, my honoured client's, your aunt, Lady Bernstein. But she has a right to impose her conditions, and I've brought 'em with me."

"Tell them, sir," says Mr. Harry.

"They are not hard. They are only for your own good; and if you say Yes, we can call a hackney-coach, and go to Clarges Street together, which I have promised to go there, whether you will or no. Mr. Warrington, I name no names, but there was a question of marriage between you and a certain party."

"Ah!" said Harry; and his countenance looked more cheerful than it had yet done.

"To that marriage my noble client, the Baroness, is most averse—having other views for you, and thinking it will be your ruin to marry a party,—of noble birth and title it is true: but, excuse me, not of first-rate character, and so much older than yourself. You had given an imprudent promise to that party."

"Yes; and she has it still," says Mr. Warrington.

"It has been recovered. She dropped it by an accident at Tunbridge," says Mr. Draper. "So my client informed me; indeed her ladyship showed it me, for the matter of that. It was wrote in bl——"

"Never mind, sir!" cries Henry, turning almost as red as the ink which he had used to write his absurd promise, of which the madness and folly had smote him with shame a thousand times over.

"At the same time letters, wrote to you, and compromising a noble family, were recovered," continues the lawyer. "You had lost 'em. It was no fault of yours. You were away when they were found again. You may say that that noble family, that you yourself, have a friend such as few young men have. Well, sir, there's no earthly promise to bind you—only so many idle words said over a bottle, which very likely any gentleman may forget. Say you won't go on with this marriage—give me and my noble friend your word of honour. Cry off, I say, Mr. W.! Don't be such a d—— fool, saving your presence, as to marry an old woman who has jilted scores of men in her time. Say the word, and I step downstairs, pay every shilling against you in the office, and put you down in my coach, either at your aunt's or at White's Club, if you like, with a couple of hundred in your pocket. Say yes; and give us your hand! There's no use in sitting grinning behind these bars all day!"

So far Mr. Draper had had the best of the talk. Harry only longed himself to be rid of the engagement from which his aunt wanted to free him. His foolish flame for Maria Esmond had died out long since. If she would release him, how thankful would he be! "Come! give us your hand, and say done!" says the lawyer, with a knowing wink. "Don't stand shilly-shallying, sir. Law bless you, Mr. W., if I had married everybody I promised, I should be like the Grand Turk, or Captain Macheath in the play!"

The lawyer's familiarity disgusted Harry, who shrank from Draper, scarcely knowing that he did so. He folded his dressing-gown round him, and stepped back from the other's proffered hand. "Give me a little time to think of the matter, if you please, Mr. Draper," he said, "and have the goodness to come to me again in an hour."

"Very good, sir, very good, sir!" says the lawyer, biting his lips, and, as he seized up his hat, turning very red. "Most parties would not want an hour to consider about such an offer as I make you: but I suppose my time must be yours, and I'll come again, and see whether you are to go or to stay. Good morning, sir—good morning." And he went his way, growling curses down the stairs. "Won't take my hand, won't he? Will tell me in an hour's time! Hang his impudence! I'll show him what an hour is!"

Mr. Draper went to his chambers in dudgeon then; bullied his clerks all round, sent off a messenger to the Baroness, to say that he had waited on the young gentleman, who had demanded a little time for consideration, which was for form's sake, as he had no doubt. The lawyer then saw clients, transacted business, went out to his dinner in the most leisurely manner; and then finally turned his steps towards the neighbouring Cursitor Street. "He'll be at home when I call, the haughty beast!" says Draper, with a sneer. "The Fortunate Youth in his room?" the lawyer asked of the sheriff's officer's aide-de-camp who came to open the double doors.

"Mr. Warrington is in his apartment," said the gentleman; "but ——" and here the gentleman winked at Mr. Draper, and laid his hand on his nose.

"But what, Mr. Paddy from Cork?" said the lawyer.

"My name is Costigan; me familee is noble, and me neetive place is the Irish methrawpolis, Mr. Six-and-Eightpence!" said the Janitor, scowling at Draper. A rich odour of spirituous liquors filled the little space between the double doors where he held the attorney in conversation.

"Confound you, sir, let me pass!" bawled out Mr. Draper.

"I can hear you perfectly well, Six-and-Eightpence, except your *h*'s, which you dthrop out of your conversation. I'll thank ye not to call neems, me good friend, or me fingers and your nose will have to make an intimate hic-quaintance. Walk in, sir! Be polite for the future to your shupariors in birth and manners, though they me be your infariors in temporary station. Confound the kay! Walk in, sir, I say!—— Madam, I have the honour of saluting ye most respectfully!"

A lady with her face covered with a capuchin, and further hidden by her handkerchief, uttered a little exclamation as of alarm as she came down the stairs at this instant and hurried past the lawyer. He was pressing forward to look at her—for Mr. Draper was very cavalier in his manners to women—but the bailiff's follower thrust his leg between Draper and the retreating lady, crying, "Keep your own distance, if you plaise! This way, Madam! I at once recognized your ladysh——" Here he closed the door on Draper's nose, and left that attorney to find his own way to his client upstairs.

At six o'clock that evening the old Baroness de Bernstein was pacing up and down her drawing room, and for ever running to the window when the noise of a coach was heard passing Clarges Street. She had delayed her dinner from hour to hour: she who scolded so fiercely, on ordinary occasions, if her cook was five minutes after his time. She had ordered two covers to be laid, plate to be set out, and some extra dishes to be prepared as if for a little *fête*. Four—five o'clock passed, and at six she looked from the window, and a coach actually stopped at her door.

"Mr. Draper" was announced, and entered, bowing profoundly.

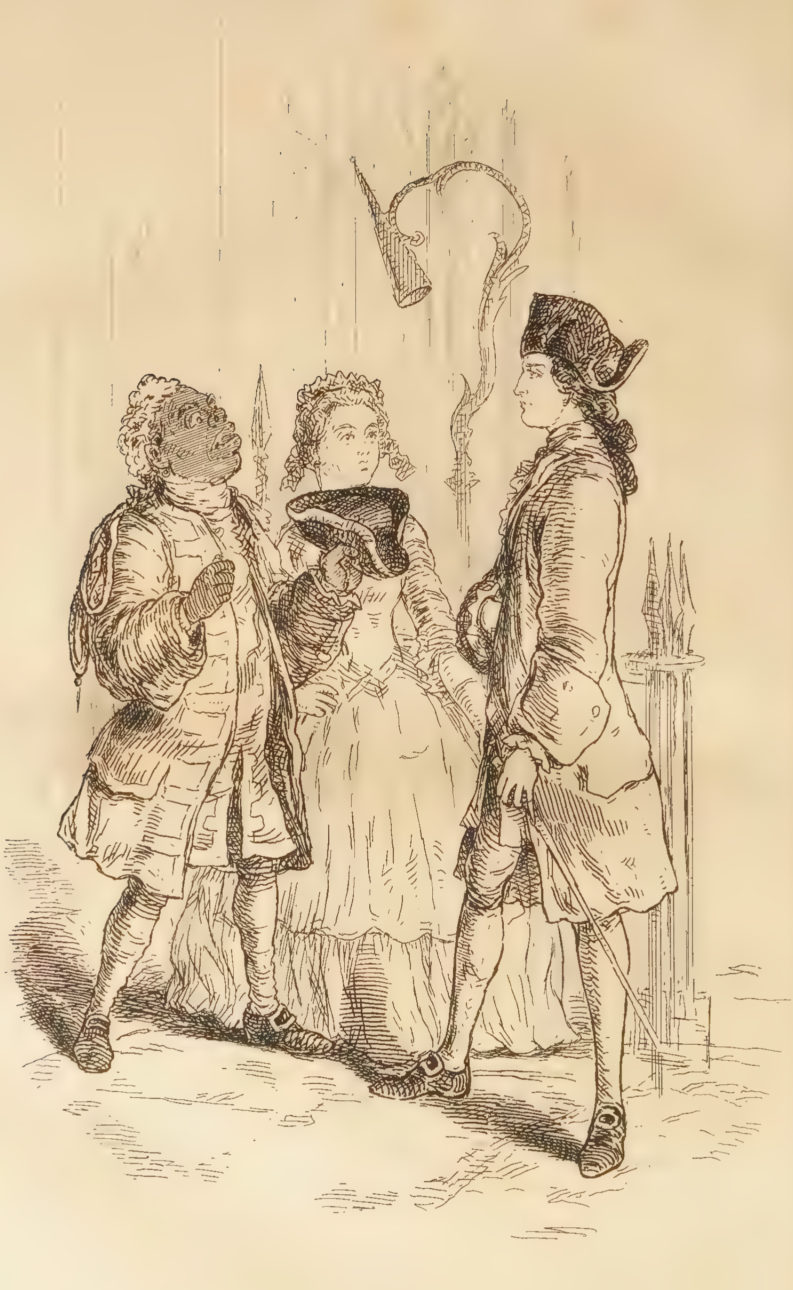
The old lady trembled on her stick. "Where is the boy?" she said quickly. "I told you to bring him, sir! How dare you come without him?"

"It is not my fault, Madam, that Mr. Warrington refuses to come." And Draper gave his version of the interview which had just taken place between himself and the young Virginian.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

AN APPARITION.

GOING off in his wrath from his morning's conversation with Harry, Mr. Draper thought he heard the young prisoner speak behind him; and, indeed, Harry had risen, and uttered a half-exclamation to call the lawyer back. But he was proud, and the other offended: Harry checked his words, and Draper did not choose to stop. It wounded Harry's pride to be obliged to humble himself before the lawyer, and to have to yield from mere lack and desire of money. "An hour hence will do as well," thought Harry, and lapsed sulkily on to the bed again. No, he did not care for Maria Esmond. No: he was ashamed of the way in which he had been entrapped into that engagement. A wily and experienced woman, she had cheated his boyish ardour. She had taken unfair advantage of him, as her brother had at play. They were his own flesh and blood, and they ought to have spared him. Instead, one and the other had made a prey of him, and had used him for their selfish ends. He thought how they had betrayed the rights of hospitality: how they had made a victim of the young kinsman who came confiding within their gates. His heart was sore wounded: his head sank back on his pillow: bitter tears wetted it.



AN APPARITION.

"Had they come to Virginia," he thought, "I had given them a different welcome!"

He was roused from this mood of despondency by Gumbo's grinning face at his door, who said a lady was come to see Master Harry, and behind the lad came the lady in the capuchin, of whom we have just made mention. Harry sat up, pale and haggard, on his bed. The lady, with a sob, and almost ere the servant-man withdrew, ran towards the young prisoner, put her arms round his neck with real emotion and a maternal tenderness, sobbed over his pale cheek and kissed it in the midst of plentiful tears, and cried out—

"Oh, my Harry! Did I ever, ever think to see thee here?"

He started back, scared as it seemed at her presence, but she sank down at the bedside, and seized his feverish hand, and embraced his knees. She had a real regard and tenderness for him. The wretched place in which she found him, his wretched look, filled her heart with a sincere love and pity.

"I—I thought none of you would come!" said poor Harry, with a groan.

More tears, more kisses of the hot young hand, more clasps and pressure with hers, were the lady's reply for a moment or two.

"Oh, my dear! my dear! I cannot bear to think of thee in misery," she sobbed out.

Hardened though it might be, that heart was not all marble—that dreary life not all desert. Harry's mother could not have been fonder, nor her tones more tender than those of his kinswoman now kneeling at his feet.

"Some of the debts, I fear, were owing to my extravagance!" she said (and this was true). "You bought trinkets and jewels in order to give me pleasure. Oh, how I hate them now! I little thought I ever could! I have brought them all with me, and more trinkets—here! and here! and all the money I have in the world!"

And she poured brooches, rings, a watch, and a score or so of guineas into Harry's lap. The sight of which strangely agitated and immensely touched the young man.

"Dearest, kindest cousin!" he sobbed out.

His lips found no more words to utter, but yet, no doubt, they served to express his gratitude, his affection, his emotion.

He became quite gay presently, and smiled as he put away some of the trinkets, his presents to Maria, and told her into what danger he had fallen by selling other goods which he had purchased on credit; and how a lawyer had insulted him just now upon this very point. He would not have his dear Maria's money—he had enough, quite enough for the present: but he valued her twenty guineas as much as if they had been twenty thousand. He would never forget her love and kindness; no, by all that was sacred he would not! His mother should know of all her goodness. It had cheered him when he was just on the point of breaking down under his disgrace and misery. Might heaven bless her for it! There is no need to pursue beyond this, the cousins' conversation. The dark day seemed brighter to Harry after Maria's visit: the imprisonment not so hard to bear. The world was not all selfish and cold. Here was a fond creature who really and truly loved him. Even Castlewood was not so bad as he had thought. He had expressed the deepest grief at not being able to assist his kinsman. He was hopelessly in debt. Every shilling he had won from Harry he had lost on the next day to others. Anything that lay in his power he would do. He would come soon and see Mr. Warrington: he was in waiting to-day, and as much a prisoner as Harry himself. So the pair talked on cheerfully and affectionately until the darkness began to close in, when Maria, with a sigh, bade Harry farewell.

The door scarcely closed upon her, when it opened to admit Draper.

"Your humble servant, sir," says the attorney. His voice jarred upon Harry's ear, and his presence offended the young man.

"I had expected you some hours ago, sir," he curtly said.

"A lawyer's time is not always his own, sir," said Mr. Draper, who had just been in consultation with a bottle of port at the "Grecian." "Never mind, I'm at your orders now. Presume it's all right, Mr. Warrington. Packed your trunk? Why, now, there you are in your bed-gown still. Let me go down and settle whilst you call in your black man and titivate a bit. I've a coach at the door, and we'll be off and dine with the old lady."

"Are you going to dine with the Baroness de Bernstein, pray?"

"Not me—no such honour. Had my dinner already. It's you are a-going to dine with your aunt, I suppose?"

"Mr. Draper, you suppose a great deal more than you know," says Mr. Warrington, looking very fierce and tall, as he folds his brocade dressing-gown round him.

"Great goodness, sir, what do you mean?" asks Draper.

"I mean, sir, that I have considered, and, that having given my word to a faithful and honourable lady, it does not become me to withdraw it."

"Confound it, sir!" shrieks the lawyer. "I tell you she has lost the paper. There's nothing to bind you—nothing. Why she's old enough to be——"

"Enough, sir," says Mr. Warrington, with a stamp of his foot. "You seem to think you are talking to some other pettifogger. I take it, Mr. Draper, you are not accustomed to have dealings with men of honour."

"Pettifogger, indeed," cries Draper in a fury. "Men of honour, indeed! I'd have you to know, Mr. Warrington, that I'm as good a man of honour as you. I don't know so many gamblers and horse-jockeys, perhaps. I haven't gambled away my patrimony, and lived as if I was a nobleman on two hundred a year. I haven't bought watches on credit, and pawned—touch me if you dare, sir," and the lawyer sprang to the door.

"That is the way out, sir. You can't go through the window, because it is barred," says Mr. Warrington.

"And the answer I take to my client is No, then!" screamed out Draper.

Harry stepped forward, with his two hands clenched. "If you utter another word," he said, "I'll——" The door was shut rapidly—the sentence was never finished, and Draper went away furious to Madame de Bernstein, from whom, though he gave her the best version of his story, he got still fiercer language than he had received from Mr. Warrington himself.

"What? Shall she trust me, and I desert her?" says Harry, stalking up and down his room in his flowing, rustling brocade. "Dear, faithful, generous woman! If I lie in prison for years, I'll be true to her."

Her lawyer dismissed after a stormy interview, the desolate old woman was fain to sit down to the meal which she had hoped to share with her nephew. The chair was before her which he was to have filled, the glasses shining by the silver. One dish after another was laid before her by the silent major-domo, and tasted and pushed away. The man pressed his mistress at last. "It is eight o'clock," he said. "You have had nothing all day. It is good for you to eat." She could not eat. She would have her coffee. Let Case go get her her coffee. The lacqueys bore the dishes off the table, leaving their mistress sitting at it before the vacant chair.

Presently the old servant re-entered the room without his lady's coffee and with a strange scared face, and said, "Mr. WARRINGTON!"

The old woman uttered an exclamation, got up from her arm-chair, but sank back in it trembling very much. "So you are come, sir, are you?" she said, with a fond shaking voice. "Bring back the ——Ah!" here she screamed. "Gracious God, who is it?" Her eyes stared wildly: her white face looked ghastly through her rouge. She clung to the arms of her chair for support, as the visitor approached her.

A gentleman whose face and figure exactly resembled Harry Warrington, and whose voice, when he spoke, had tones strangely similar, had followed the servant into the room. He bowed low towards the Baroness.

"You expected my brother, Madam?" he said. "I am but now arrived in London. I went to his house. I met his servant at your door, who was bearing this letter for you. I thought I would bring it to your ladyship before going to him." And the stranger laid down a letter before Madame Bernstein.

"Are you"—gasped out the Baroness—"are you my nephew, that we supposed was——"

"Was killed—and is alive! I am George Warrington, Madam, and I ask his kinsfolk, What have you done with my brother?"

"Look, George!" said the bewildered old lady. "I expected him here to-night—that chair was set for him—I have been waiting for him, sir, till now—till I am quite faint——I don't like—I don't like being alone. Do stay and sup with me!"

"Pardon me, Madam. Please God, my supper will be with Harry to-night!"

"Bring him back. Bring him back here on any conditions! It is but five hundred pounds! Here is the money, sir, if you need it!"

"I have no want, Madam. I have money with me that can't be better employed than in my brother's service."

"And you will bring him to me, sir! Say you will bring him to me!"

Mr. Warrington made a very stately bow for answer, and quitted the room, passing by the amazed domestics, and calling with an air of authority to Gumbo to follow.

Had Mr. Harry received no letters from home? Master Harry had not opened all his letters the last day or two. Had he received no letter announcing his brother's escape from the French settlements and return to Virginia? Oh, no! No such letter had come, else Master Harry certainly tell Gumbo. Quick, horses! Quick by Strand to Temple Bar! Here is the house of Captivity and the Deliverer come to the rescue!

END OF VOL. I.

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